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THE PEOPLES AND POLITICS

OF

THE FAR EAST

TRAVELS AND STUDIES IN THE BRITISH, FRENCH, SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE COLONIES, SIBERIA, CHINA, JAPAN, KOREA, SIAM AND MALAYA

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a.c.

BY
HENRY NORMAN
AUTHOR OF "THE REAL JAPAN"

WITH SIXTY
ILLUSTRATIONS AND
FOUR MAPS

LONDON: T. FISHER UNWIN
PATERNOSTER SQUARE
MDCCCXCV

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PREFACE.

This book is the result of nearly four years of travel and study in the countries and colonies of which it treats. I have described and discussed no place that I did not visit, and in every one I remained long enough, and was fortunate enough in learning the views and experiences of the local authorities and best-informed residents, to make sure at any rate that I was not misled into mere hasty impressions. If I appear to present some of my conclusions with excessive confidence, this fault is to be explained, and I trust excused, first, by my conviction of the importance to Great Britain of the issues involved, and second, by my faith in the accuracy and wisdom of my many informants.

The Far East presents itself to the attentive traveller under two aspects. It is the last Wonderland of the World; and it is also the seed-bed of a multitude of new political issues. I have endeavoured to reflect in these pages this twofold quality of my subject. Therefore the record of mere travel is interwoven with that of investigation: the incidents and the adventures of the

hour are mingled with the factors and the statistics of the permanent problems. By this means I have hoped to reproduce upon the reader's mind something of the effect of the Far East upon my own. It is a picture which is destined, either in bright colours or in sombre, to become increasingly familiar to him in the future.

I find myself wholly unable to acknowledge here even a small part of the help and hospitality I received, and I can only express this general but deep obligation. To Sir Robert Hart, Bart., however, first of all; to Sir Cecil Clementi Smith, ex-Governor of the Straits Settlement; to Sir G. William Des Voeux, formerly Governor of Hongkong; and to Mr. F. A. Swettenham, C.M.G., British Resident of Perak, I have to offer my special thanks. To my friend Mr. R. L. Moffatt, whose knowledge of Siam is more intimate than that of any foreigner living, and who at the time of my stay in Bangkok was governor of the late Crown Prince and tutor to the Royal children, I have to acknowledge great indebtedness. I need hardly add that these gentlemen must not be forcibly connected with any of my opinions. Mr. J. Scott Keltie, Assistant Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society, the Librarian of the Colonial Office, and the Librarian of the Royal Statistical Society, have been good enough to give me valuable technical assistance.

In a few instances I have reproduced here, with considerable alterations, parts of contributions to the

daily and periodical Press, chiefly descriptions of places written on the spot. The greater part of the illustrations are from my own photographs; one or two are by that excellent photographer A. Fong, of Hongkong, one or two by Mr. Chit, and one by Mr. Loftus, both of Bangkok. The maps, which present certain geographical facts not—so far as I know—to be found in conjunction elsewhere, have been drawn under my own supervision.

H. N.

LONDON, *December* 31, 1894.

ERRATA.

Page 134, line 12 from foot: *for* 257,068,654 *read* 257,048,654
,, 136, ,, 5 from top: *for* 63,231,047 *read* 63,211,047.

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LONDON: T. FISHER UNWIN, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.

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THE BRITISH EMPIRE IN THE FAR EAST.

CHAPTER I.

OUTPOSTS OF EMPIRE: SHANGHAI AND HONGKONG.

AN Englishman writing an account of the Far East finds himself in a dilemma at the outset. If he follows his natural inclination to describe at length the British Colonies there, their astonishing history, their race-problems, their commercial achievements, and their exhibition of the colonising genius of his race; and especially if he yields to the temptation to dwell upon their extraordinary picturesqueness, he lays himself open to the just criticism that these are matters already familiar to every one of his readers. On the other hand, if he takes this familiarity for granted, and omits them from his survey, the brightest colour is lacking from the picture and the most potent factor from the problem. This would obviously be the greater evil, and therefore in my own case, risking the reproach, I propose to touch upon the external aspects of the British Colonies in the Far East just enough to convey some notion of the physical conditions and surroundings under which our countrymen there live and labour, and to write at somewhat greater length of a few vital matters which do not present themselves on the surface. One thing, at any rate, can never be told too often or impressed too strongly, namely, that our Far Eastern Colonies are not mere outlying units, each with a sentimental and commercial connection with Great Britain, but bone of the bone of the Empire, and flesh of its flesh.

Among the many surprises of a journey in the Far East, one of the greatest is certainly the first sight of Shanghai.

I was writing below as we steamed up the Hwang-pu river, and did not come on the deck of the *Hae-an* till five minutes before she anchored. Then I could hardly believe my eyes. There lay a magnificent European city surrounding a broad and crowded river. True, the magnificence is only skin-deep, so to speak, all the architectural beauty and solidity of Shanghai being spread out along the river; but I am speaking of the first sight of Shanghai, and in this respect it is superior to New York, far ahead of San Francisco, and almost as imposing for the moment as Liverpool itself. A broad and beautifully kept boulevard, called of course "The Bund," runs round the river, with a row of well-grown trees and a broad grass-plat at the water's edge, and this Bund is lined on the other side from one end to the other with mercantile buildings second to none of their kind in the world—the "hongs" of the great firms, and the banks; the fine edifices of the Masonic Hall and the Shanghai Club; and the magnificent new quarters of the Imperial Customs Service. At the upper end of the Bund a large patch of green shows the Public Garden, where the band plays on summer evenings. At night all Shanghai is bright with the electric light, and its telegraph poles remind you of Chicago—I believe I counted nearly a hundred wires on one pole opposite the Club. And the needed touch of colour is added to the scene as you look at it from on deck, by the gay flags of the mail steamers and the Consular bunting floating over the town.

The first sight of Shanghai, moreover, is only its first surprise. As I was rolling away to the hotel the 'ricksha coolie turned on to the right-hand side of the road. Instantly a familiar figure stepped off the sidewalk and shook a warning finger, and the coolie swung back again to the left side. It was a policeman—no semi-Europeanised Mongolian, languidly performing a half-understood duty, but the genuine home article, helmet, blue suit, silver buttons, regulation boots, truncheon and all—just "bobby." And his uplifted finger turned the traffic to the

left in Shanghai precisely as it does in front of the Mansion House. A hundred yards further on there was a flash of scarlet in the sun, and there stood a second astonishing figure—a six-foot copper-coloured Sikh, topped by a huge red turban, and clad also in blue and armed with the same truncheon, striding solemnly by on his beat. Then came the Chinese policeman, with his little saucer hat of red bamboo and his white gaiters, swinging a diminutive staff—a reduced and rather comical replica of his big English and Indian comrades. Then as we crossed the bridge into the French Concession there appeared the *sergent de ville*, absolutely the same as you see him in the Place de l'Opéra—peaked cap, waxed moustache, baggy red trousers, sabre, and revolver. And beyond him again was the Frenchified Chinese policeman. In fact, Shanghai is guarded municipally by no fewer than six distinct species of policemen—English, Sikh, Anglo-Chinese, French, Franco-Chinese, and the long-legged mounted Sikhs on sturdy white ponies, who clank their sabres around the outskirts of the town, and carry terror into the turbulent Chinese quarters.

Shanghai, like so much of the Empire, was originally *spolia opima*. It was captured from the Chinese on June 19, 1842, and opened to foreign trade in November, 1843. It is in the middle of the coast-line of China, in the south-east corner of the province of Kiang-su, at the junction of the rivers Hwang-pu and Woosung (or Soochow Creek), twelve miles above the point where these flow together into the estuary of the Yangtsze. Shanghai is thus practically at the mouth of the great waterway of China, and it is the chief outlet and distributing centre for the huge northern and central provinces. It has been called the "commercial metropolis of China," since so large a percentage of the total foreign trade of China passes through it. The native city, which has about 125,000 inhabitants, and lies behind the foreign city, was an important emporium of trade for centuries. Its walls, which are three miles and a half in circumference, were

built in the sixteenth century to keep off an earlier Japanese invasion. The French obtained a grant of their present Settlement in return for services rendered in driving out the rebels in 1853. Shanghai has been the scene of a good deal of warfare. In 1853 the native city was captured by the rebels, who held it for seventeen months. In 1861, the Taiping rebels, after capturing Soochow in the previous year, advanced upon Shanghai, but were driven back by British and Indian regiments, aided by French marines. It was at this time that "Chinese Gordon" appeared upon the scene. The Imperial authorities, at their wits' end, allowed an American adventurer to enlist a number of more or less disreputable foreigners, and with their aid to raise and drill a horde of natives. These passed under the command of another American named Burgevine, who finally deserted to the rebels. The Imperialists were thus left with a mutinous and almost uncontrollable band of their own people to deal with, little more dangerous than the rebels themselves. It was these that Major Gordon, R.E., was allowed to discipline and lead against the Taipings, as the self-christened "Ever-Victorious Army," and it was no doubt owing to his extraordinary prowess that the Imperial authority was re-established. Opinions differ among students of Chinese history as to whether it would not have been better for China had the Taipings succeeded. I came upon many curious reminiscences of General Gordon up and down the coast of China. He was a man of remarkable virtues and of no less remarkable weaknesses, and the stories of him which survive in the Far East would make very interesting reading. I do not give them, however, because public opinion seems to have determined that this many-sided man shall be known under one aspect only of his life—that of hero. I will only say that there is correspondence of his still in existence in China, some of which I have read, which should in the interests of history be published. His opinions of the Viceroy Li Hung-chang, whom he greatly respected and whom he had once spent some time in trying to shoot with his own hand, were of a par-

ticularly striking character. The original régulations under which Shanghai is governed were drawn up by the British Consul in 1845. These were amended in 1854 by an agreement between the Consul and the inhabitants; and in 1863 the American Settlement was amalgamated with the British. A number of vain efforts have been made to induce the French to join this, but although much smaller both in area, population, and trade, it has declined to do so, and remains under the "Réglement d'Organisation Municipale de la Concession Française" of 1862. The other two nationalities have not yet succeeded in agreeing with the diplomatic authorities for the revision of the "Council for the Foreign Community of Shanghai North of the Yang-king-pang" of 1870.

Modern Shanghai is thus divided, like ancient Gaul, into three parts: the English settlement, the American settlement, called Hongkew, and the much smaller French "Concession." Three creeks divide these communities from each other—Yang-king-pang, Soochow Creek, and Defence Creek between the English settlement and China. One wide thoroughfare, called "the Maloo," runs through Shanghai out past the race-course and the Horse-Bazaar into the country, and along this in the afternoon there is a stream of ponies and smart carriages and pedestrians and bicyclists. It is the Rotten Row of Shanghai, leading to the Bubbling Well, and the one country drive the community possesses. But in truth there is not much "country" about it, the environs of Shanghai being flat and ugly—the nearest hill being nineteen miles away, and covered with grave-mounds as thickly as the battlefields round Gravelotte.

Shanghai dubbed itself long ago the "Model Settlement." Then a noble English globe-trotter came along, and afterwards described it in the House of Lords as "a sink of corruption." Thereupon a witty Consul suggested that in future it should be known as the "Model Sink." For my own part I should not grudge it the first title, for it is one of the best governed

places municipally—at any rate, so far as the Anglo-American quarters are concerned — that I have ever known. The French, as I have said, live apart under their own Municipal Council, presided over, and even dismissed at pleasure, by their own Consul. The English and American elected Municipal Council consists of nine members, with an elected chairman at its head. And a short stay in Shanghai is sufficient to show how satisfactorily this works. The roads are perfect, the traffic is kept under admirable direction and control, the streets are quiet and orderly, and even the coolies are forbidden to push their great wheelbarrows through the foreign settlement with ungreased wheels. The third surprise of Shanghai does not dawn upon you immediately. It is a Republic—a community of nations, self-governed and practically independent, for it snaps its fingers politely at the Chinese authorities or discusses any matter with them upon equal terms, and it does not hesitate to differ pointedly in opinion from its own Consuls when it regards their action as unwise or their interference as unwarranted. Over the Chinese within its borders the Municipal Council has, however, no jurisdiction. In the "Maloo" there is a magistrate's Yamên, and there the famous "Mixed Court" sits every morning, consisting of the Chinese magistrate and one of the foreign Consuls in turn. All natives charged with offences against foreigners or foreign law are dealt with there, petty criminals being punished in the municipal prison or the chain-gang, serious offenders, or refugees from Chinese law, being sent into the native city. The Chinese magistrate in the Mixed Court is, of course, a figure-head, chiefly useful, so far as I could see, in lecturing the prisoners while the foreigner made up his mind what punishment to award. In criminal cases the Mixed Court works fairly well, but in civil suits it gives rise to numerous and bitter complaints. The population of Shanghai on December 31, 1891, was estimated at 4,956 foreigners (British, 1,759; Japanese, 751; Portuguese, 542; French, 332; American, 450; Spanish, 245; German, 330), and Chinese, 175,000.

The Republic of Shanghai has its own army, of course, composed of volunteer infantry, 159 strong; artillery, with 4 guns and 45 men; and a smart but diminutive troop of 38 light horse. It has also volunteer fire-brigades, and no fewer than seven distinct postal systems of different nationalities. An amusing fact in connection with the artillery—amusing chiefly to any one who appreciates the red-tape which binds the military authorities at home, is that the latter presented the Shanghai volunteers with four excellent field-guns, and send out an annual allowance of ammunition. No doubt they believe that Shanghai is a British colony, whereas the fun lies in the fact that it is simply some land leased in perpetuity from the Emperor of China, and that it is always possible—it may be the case to-day for all I know—that a majority of those serving the guns are non-British subjects. But this is only for the joke's sake. The volunteers get great praise from the official inspector each year, and they may be called upon to protect British lives and property at any moment. So the War Office did a wise thing after all, in spite of the fact that the volunteers are a "politically anomalous" body

The social life of Shanghai is the natural outgrowth of its Republican institutions. It is democratic, and characterised by a tolerant good-fellowship. Upon this point a well-known lady was kind enough to set me right. "In Shanghai," she explained, "everybody is equal. In Hongkong everybody is not equal. There are those of us who call at Government House, and those who do not." After so lucid an analysis it was impossible to err. All male Shanghai meets in the Club—one of the most comfortable and complete in the world—before tiffin and before dinner, to exchange news, make up dinner-parties, and do business—all three with equal zest. And the hospitality of Shanghai is another surprise. You might as well attempt to give your shadow the slip as to escape from the gratuitous good cheer of the Model Settlement. As for sport, on the whole Shanghai is ahead of the rest of the East. It has

its charming country club, its races twice a year, its regatta, when the Chinese authorities stop all the native traffic on the river, its polo, its two cricket clubs, its base-ball, and its shooting parties in house-boats up the Yangtsze and to the hills twenty miles away. And on Saturday afternoons if you walk out to the Bubbling Well about four o'clock you can see the finish of the paper hunt and a dozen well-mounted and scrupulously-dressed jockeys come riding in to the finish and taking a rather bad fence and ditch which has been carefully prepared with the object of receiving half of them in the sight of their fair friends. Finally, there are the hounds and their master. And what matter if a slanderous tradition does fret their fair fame, to the effect that once upon a time, discarding the deceptive aniseed-bag, a fox was imported from Japan, and that the end of that hunting-day was that one-half the pack ran into an unlucky chow-dog and broke him up, and the other half chased a Chinese boy for his life, while the master stood upon a grave-mound winding his horn to a deserted landscape?

The trade of Shanghai may be roughly divided under five heads: imports—cotton piece-goods, metals, and kerosene oil; exports—tea and silk. The tea trade, as elsewhere in China, has fallen off grievously of late, owing to the gradual fall in quality, and the competition of Ceylon and Indian teas. Foreign tea-men have made efforts of every kind to induce Chinese growers to improve their processes of preparation, but without much result. It is chiefly in the English market, however, that the trade has suffered. Improvement in quality (says the Commissioner of Customs) is an absolute necessity, but "China can never hope to produce a tea which will compare with Indian according to the only standard which now seems to be applicable in England —the standard of strength, the capacity to colour, to a certain point of darkness, so many gallons of water to each pound of tea." It seems as unlikely that the Chinese will learn to improve their qualities as that we shall learn how to know good tea from bad, and how to "make" it when we have secured it. To every

Eastern tea-drinker the tea served at the best houses in England would be a horror. Nobody who has not travelled in the East, and arrived, after a day's tramp through a malarious and steaming jungle, at some poor Chinaman's shanty, and thankfully drunk a dozen cups of the beverage freely offered, can know how delicious and invigorating even the most modest tea can be. The same cause has already produced a standstill and will soon produce a reduction in the Chinese silk trade. Chinese silk would be as good as any in the world if it were properly prepared, but it is now used only to add to other kinds; whereas Japanese silk, because prepared with Western methods and conscientious intelligence, has increased its output tenfold since Japan began to sell it to foreigners. This is the old, old story of China, and it will probably never be altered until foreigners contrive—or their governments for them—to exert authority in the Celestial Kingdom, as well as to tender advice and drive bargains. The figures of Shanghai trade are, of course, a striking testimony to the preponderance of British interests and enterprise. In 1893 the number of ships entered and cleared, both under steam and sail, was 6,317, with a total tonnage of 6,529,870. Of these, 3,092 were British, and their tonnage 3,664,175. Or, to exhibit the comparative insignificance of the shipping of all other foreign nations, out of the above grand totals British and Chinese ships together numbered no fewer than 4,721, with a tonnage of no less than 5,280,310. The total foreign trade of Shanghai for 1893 was 139,268,000 Haikwan taels,* of which Great Britain, Hongkong, and India stand for 80,826,000, or over 58 per cent.,* besides trade with

* It is practically impossible to give the accurate gold equivalent of these sums. First, because silver falls so rapidly that a calculation of exchange is obsolete before it gets back from the printer; and second, because the purchasing power of silver in the East has not fallen to anything like the same extent as its exchange against gold. The average exchange of the Haikwan or Customs tael for 1893 was 3s. 11½d., and the British Consul calculates at this figure, making the total foreign trade £27,418,388. In dealing with the figures of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs later on I have reckoned the tael at 3s. 4d., as a nearer approximation.

other parts of the British Empire which it is impossible to calculate separately. The direct trade with Great Britain, both imports and exports, has fallen off greatly during the past twenty years, largely because the Suez Canal has brought the southern ports of Europe into closer communication with China. But the trade between China and India is growing rapidly, although the export of opium to China from Indian ports is falling steadily and will ultimately all but disappear.

It is curious that by the "Land Regulations," which form the Constitution of Shanghai, the Chinese are forbidden to reside or hold property within the Foreign Settlements, and yet there are 175,000 of them afloat and ashore; and I fancy even Shanghai itself would be astounded if it could be told exactly what proportion of the whole property is in their hands. There has been a good deal of talk about this, and in reply to a "Cassandra" who wrote to the papers that nothing could save Shanghai but amalgamation with the Chinese, a local writer produced some witty verses, telling how in a vision in the twentieth century—

> "I passed a lawyer's office, on the shingle
> Was 'Wang and Johnson, Barristers-at-law';
> Where'er the nations had begun to mingle,
> Chinese came first, I saw.
>
> "A steamer passed; a native gave the orders;
> An English quartermaster held the wheel;
> The chain-gang all were white, the stalwart warders
> Yellow from head to heel."

Physically, at any rate, the Chinese are undoubtedly crowding out the Europeans. The wealthy Celestial keenly appreciates the fact that his person and his property are infinitely securer under the Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes than under the rapacious and unrestrained rule of the representative of the Son of Heaven. He is therefore prepared to pay whatever may be necessary to secure a good piece of property within which to live and trade in the foreign settlement. Whenever such a piece comes into the market it is almost sure to be

knocked down to a Chinese purchaser. "Very many retired and expectant officials now make their homes in Shanghai, also many merchants who have made money. As a result, the best paying property is Chinese occupied, and of that the best is the property on which stand the pretentious establishments which furnish amusement to the Chinese *jeunesse dorée*—a class which in pre-Taiping days counted Soochow and Hangchow earthly paradises, and which now finds that the pleasures of those capitals are as abundantly supplied in the Foochow Road. This influx of Chinese has had the effect of compelling foreigners, and especially those of small means, to seek every year dwellings farther away from the busy centres, which the Chinese now monopolise. The rents of foreign houses in the Settlements are gradually rising, for as each old foreign building is pulled down Chinese houses take its place." *

Another very great and indeed vital change has come over Shanghai of late years. Formerly business was done by real merchants—that is, traders who bought to sell again. Those were the days of quickly-realised and enormous fortunes—of the merchant-princes of the Far East, whose hospitality, formerly famous the world over, is now but a golden tradition, since "luxurious living is practised by old-timers rather in obedience to ancient custom than justified by present affluence." Now the merchant, if not already extinct, is rapidly becoming so, and his place taken by the commission agent. Competition and the incalculable and ruinous fluctuations of exchange are the two factors which have brought about this result. Both as regards the character of business done, and the *personnel* of those who do it, the change is for the worse. Little or no capital is necessary, as every detail of the transactions is fixed beforehand by telegraph—the price of the goods, the freight, and the rate of exchange. It is therefore possible to do business on a very small margin, with the result that men under-bid one another

* Mr. R. E. Bredon's very able Report on Shanghai, Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs, Decennial Reports, 1882-1891.

down to the last fraction, and the further result that an unscrupulous member of the trading community is tempted to get business of this kind by any and every means. It is obvious that more intimate relations between the Chinese themselves and the European markets would soon result in the elimination of the foreign agent altogether.

Two other causes are also appearing to transform the Shanghai of old time, and indeed all the business relations between foreigners and Chinese. The first is the growth of Chinese manufactures. The Chinese Cotton Cloth Mill Company, the Chinese Spinning Company, the Shanghai Paper Mill Company, the Min-li Ginning Mill Company, and the Yuen-chee Ginning Mill Company, are all Chinese concerns, with Chinese capital and under Chinese management, with foreign technical assistance. The first-named of these is supposed to be financed by the Viceroy Li Hung-chang himself. It was recently completely destroyed by fire, but is being rebuilt on a much larger scale than before. These enterprises have not yet paid much in the way of dividend, owing probably to inexperienced direction, but there is no reason to suppose that they will not be successful in the end. And their success would probably mean a nearly proportionate amount of European failure. The reader will naturally ask at once why foreigners have not started such concerns themselves. The answer is based to a great extent upon the supineness of a recent British Minister to China. The Chinese claim—without any justice, so far as I can make out—that the treaties give no right to foreigners to manufacture within the treaty limits, and their claim has never met with serious official resistance. They even go so far as to prohibit, without a special permit, the importation of machinery on foreign account, which is ridiculously in contradiction of plain treaty rights. It is to be hoped that one among the innumerable results of the present war will be the settlement of this question in favour of Europeans. The benefits to Chinese consumers would be incalculable, and the whole world might well

gain an enormous and unexpected advantage from the opening of China which would almost necessarily ensue, since, as has been truly said,* if China were only fairly open to foreign enterprise, there is room in her vast territories and among her millions of inhabitants for all the surplus silver of the world for many years to come.

In connection with this probable cause of a change in the future of Shanghai must also be mentioned the great and increasing amount of purely Chinese capital invested, not only in native enterprises within treaty limits, such as those I have mentioned, but also in foreign companies, with foreign management, and known by foreign names. The China Merchants' Steam Navigation Company, with its fine fleet, represents a large native investment, in which the Viceroy Li is again prominent, and it is freely said that many ships trading under foreign flags are in reality Chinese property. Moreover, although this is a well-kept secret, a surprising proportion of the deposits in foreign banks is believed to stand in Chinese names. In view of all this extensive and constantly growing Chinese investment in property, mortgages, shipping, manufacturing enterprises, and banking deposits, it is inevitable that those who thus pay the piper should claim more and more the right to call the tune. The second cause of the change to be anticipated is Japanese competition with European firms for the foreign trade of China. This is a factor of the greatest future importance, but discussion of it will come more appropriately in a later chapter. Though Shanghai may change, however, and indeed must change, there is no reason to despair of its future as an outpost of British Trade. The openings for foreigners and foreign capital may both decrease, but the bulk of trade will increase. Mr. Commissioner Bredon says, "I think the future of Shanghai depends on China and the Chinese and their interests, and that foreigners would be wise to run with them," and his opinion should carry great weight. Two

* By Mr. Consul Jamieson, F. O. Reports, Annual Series, No. 1442, p. 23.

events, on the other hand, may open up for Shanghai a future brighter than its brightest past. The Chinese railway may make it into the link between the whole of China and the rest of the world; or the present war may end by throwing China open at last, in which case the unequalled situation of Shanghai would give it the lion's share of the enormous trade that would arise.

The first sight of Hongkong, the farthest outpost of the British Empire and the fourth port in the world, is disappointing. As you approach it from the north you enter a narrow and unimposing pass: then you discover a couple of sugar-refineries covering the hills with smoke; and when the city of Victoria lies before you it is only St. John's or Vladivostok on a larger scale. It is piled up on the steep sides of the island without apparent purpose or cohesion; few fine buildings detach themselves from the mass; there is no boulevard along the water-front; and the greater part of the houses and offices in the immediate foreground, though many of them are in reality large and costly structures, look a medley from a little distance. In one's disappointment one remembers Mr. Howell's caustic characterisation of the water-front of New York—that after London and Liverpool it looks as though the Americans were encamped there. The face of Hongkong is not its fortune, and anybody merely steaming by would never guess the marvel it grows on closer acquaintance. For a few weeks' investigation transfigures this precipitous island into one of the most astonishing spots on the earth's surface. By an inevitable alchemy, the philosopher's stone of a few correlated facts transforms one's disappointment into stupefaction. Shanghai is a surprise, but Hongkong is a revelation.

When you land at the city of Victoria (it is strange, by the way, that almost everybody at home and half the visitors there are ignorant that "Victoria" is the name of the city and "Hongkong" of the island), the inevitable 'ricksha carries you through a couple of streets, far from being beautiful or well-

managed, but you forget this in the rush of life about you. Messengers jostle you, 'rickshas run over your toes, chair-poles dig you in the ribs. The hotel clerk smiles politely as he informs you that there has not been a vacant room for a month. Later on your fellow-passengers envy you the little rabbit-hole of a bedroom you have secured at the top of the Club. When you come down again into the hall you find it crowded with brokers of many nationalities, making notes, laughing, whispering, drinking, but all just as busy as they can be. The Stock Exchange of Hongkong was the gutter, the local Rialto extending from the Club for about a hundred yards down the Queen's Road, and it was filled with Britishers, Germans, Anglo-Indians, Chinese from Canton, Armenians from Calcutta, Parsees from Bombay, and Jews from Baghdad, and with that peculiar contingent known as the "black brigade," recognisable by the physiognomy of Palestine and the accent of Spitalfields. And on the Club walls and tables are a dozen printed "Expresses," timed with the minute at which they were issued, and the mail and shipping noon and afternoon "extras" of the daily papers, announcing the arrivals and departures of steamers, the distribution of cargoes, the sales by auction, and all the multitudinous movements of a great commercial machine running at high pressure. For, to apply to the Far East the expressive nomenclature of the Far West, this colony "just hums" all the time. At least, it hummed in this way on the many occasions when I was there, as it will hum again, though just at present, what with the utter reaction from over-speculation, the general depression of trade, the fluctuations of silver, and the paralysing effect of the plague, Victoria is a depressed and rather unhappy place. Then the chair a friend has sent to take you to dinner arrives, with its four coolies uniformed in blue and white calico, and by another twist of the kaleidoscope you find yourself, three minutes after leaving the Club, mounting an asphalte roadway at an angle not far short of forty-five degrees, hemmed in above and on

either hand by great green palms and enormous drooping ferns with fronds yards long, among which big butterflies are playing round long scarlet flowers. For as soon as you begin to ascend, the streets of Hongkong might be alleys in the tropical conservatories at Kew.

Hongkong is built in three layers. The ground-floor, so to speak, or sea-level, is the commercial part of the Colony. The "Praya" along the water's edge is given up to shipping, and is altogether unworthy of the place. It is about to be changed, however, by a magnificent undertaking, now in progress, the "Praya Reclamation Scheme," originated and pressed to a successful issue by the Hon. C. P. Chater, by which the land frontage will be pushed out 250 feet, and a depth of twenty feet secured at all states of the tide. The next street, parallel to it, Queen's Road, is the Broadway of Hongkong, and all the business centres upon it. In the middle are the Club, post-office, courts, and hotels; then come all the banks and offices and shops; past these to the east are the different barracks, and as one gradually gets further from the centre, come the parade-ground, cricket-ground, polo-ground, and race-course, and the wonderfully picturesque and pretty cemetery, the "Happy Valley." In the other direction you formerly passed all the Chinese shops for foreigners and then got into Chinatown, a quarter of very narrow streets, extremely dirty, inconceivably crowded, and probably about as insanitary as any place on the globe under civilised rule. I never ceased to prophesy two things about Hongkong, one of which, the epidemic, has come true indeed. The other waits, and as it is rather alarmist it is perhaps better left out of print. The worst parts of Chinatown have now been destroyed, literally at the cannon's mouth, and in spite of every possible Chinese threat, so that this blot on the Colony is erased. This is all on the island of Hongkong, while across the harbour, in the British territory of Kowloon, a new city is springing up—a splendid frontage of wharves and warehouses; a collection of docks, one

of which will take almost any ship afloat; half a dozen summer-houses, a little palace among them—whose splendid hospitality is for the moment eclipsed; and the pleasure-gardens and kitchen-gardens of the community.

The second storey of Hongkong lies ten minutes' climb up the steep side of the island. Here nearly everybody lives, and lives, too, in a luxury and ease that are not suspected at home. Here is Government House, a fine official residence in beautiful grounds; Headquarter House; and the wonderful streets I have already mentioned, although one might as properly call Windsor a house as describe these palm-shaded walks and groves as streets.

Finally, there is the third layer, the top storey of Hongkong, known collectively as "The Peak." The Peak itself is one of the highest of the hundred hills of the island, rising precipitously behind the city to the signal station, 1,842 feet above the sea, where a gun and a flagstaff announce the arrival of mails and ocean steamers. But "The Peak" as a residential district means all the hill-tops where cool breezes from the sea blow in summer, where one can sleep under a blanket at night, and where, in a word, one can spend a summer in Hongkong with a reasonable probability of being alive at the end of it. Here everybody who can afford it has a second house, and so many are these fortunate people that the "top side" of the island is dotted all over with costly houses and bungalows; there are two hotels, and a steam tramway runs up and down every fifteen minutes. The fare up is thirty cents—a shilling—and down half as much. This is startling enough, but a better notion of the expense of life here is conveyed by the fact that to have a second house at "The Peak" for the summer you must rent it for the whole year, as it is uninhabitable in winter, at a rental of 150 to 200 dollars a month—about a sovereign a day all the year round for four or five months' residence. Besides this, there is the tramway fare, the cost of coolies to carry your chair up and down, and the expense

of bringing every item of domestic supplies, from coals to cabbage, a forty-five minutes' climb uphill. But what is the summer climate on the second storey of Hongkong which forces people to flee from it at so much trouble and cost? To be frank, almost every man I asked before I had experience of it, described it to me by the monosyllabic appellation of the ultimate destination of the incorrigible unrighteous. One of the chief summer problems of Hongkong is to determine whether the mushrooms which grow on your boots during the night are edible or not. The damp is indescribable. Moisture pours down the walls; anything left alone for a couple of days—clothes, boots, hats, portmanteaus—is covered with mould. Twenty steps in the open air and you are soaked with perspiration. Then there are the cockroaches, to say nothing of the agile centipede whose bite may lay you up for a month. When the booksellers receive a case of books, the first thing they do is to varnish them all over with a damp-resisting composition containing corrosive sublimate. Otherwise the cockroaches would eat them before they had time to go mouldy. If you come home at night after dinner very tired, beware of carelessly throwing your evening clothes over a chair, as you would at home. If you do, the cockroaches will have destroyed them before you wake. They must be hung up in a wardrobe with hermetically fitting doors. It does happen, too, that men die in summer in Hongkong between sunrise and sunset without rhyme or reason. And the community is a pale-faced one, though it is only right to add that it numbers probably as many athletes and vigorous workers as any other. The place used to be known as "the grave of regiments"—a stroll through "Happy Valley" tells you why. Now the men are not allowed outside barracks in summer until five p.m., and there is a regular inspection to see that every man has his cholera-belt on. The "down side" of Hongkong is damp and hot; the "top side" is damp and cool. That is the difference for which people are prepared to pay so heavily. The first time I stayed at "The Peak" I noticed round

the house a number of large stoppered bottles, such as you see in druggists' windows, prettily encased in wicker-work. On inquiring of my host he showed me that one contained biscuits, another cigars, another writing-paper, and so on, each hollow stopper being filled with unslaked lime in filtering paper, to absorb any damp that might penetrate inside. These bottles tell the whole tale. People run over to Macao, that Lusitanian Thule, four hours' steaming away, for Sunday, and when the summer is proving too much for them and their thoughts begin to run on "Happy Valley" and a grave there—like that of Martha's husband in Padua, "well-placed for cool and comfortable rest"—they just go on board a steamer and disembark at Nagasaki or Yokohama. Japan is the sanitarium of the Far East.

A striking feature of Hongkong is the elegance and solidity of its public works. Its waterworks at Tytam, on the other side of the island, are almost picturesque, and the aqueduct which supplies the city is the basis of a footway three miles long, called the Bowen Road, of asphalte and cement as smooth and solid as a billiard-table, which laughs at the tremendous downpours of the rainy season. "Happy Valley" is the pride of Hongkong, and the palm-shaded road I described above was a dangerous and ugly ravine called "Cut-throats' Alley" a few years ago. Speaking of cut-throats reminds me that Hongkong even now is not a particularly safe place. People avoid walking alone at night in one or two directions; every Sikh constable carries a rifle at night and several rounds of ball cartridge, and if you hail a sampan at night to go to dinner on board some ship in the harbour, the constable at the pier makes a note of its number, in case you should be missing the next day. For these sampan people used to have a pleasant habit of suddenly dropping the mat awning on the head of a passenger, cutting his throat in the ensuing struggle and dropping his pillaged body overboard. The Sikhs make admirable policemen, obedient, trustworthy, and brave, and are correspondingly

detested by the Chinese. If they sin at all, it is from too much zeal, and I believe they take a keen personal pleasure in whacking a Chinaman. There is a story to the effect that during an epidemic of burglaries general orders were issued to them to arrest all suspicious-looking people who did not halt when challenged at night, especially if they had ladders. Next night a Sikh on duty saw a Chinaman on the top of a ladder. Nothing could have been clearer, so he challenged the man, who paid no attention, and then fired and brought him down. It was the lamplighter. Even now no Chinaman is supposed to be out after nine p.m. without a pass.

Unlike Shanghai, which is an international republic, Hongkong is, of course, a genuine British colony, and in no part of the world is the colonising genius of the British race, or the results of its free-trade policy, better shown. It was ceded to the British in January, 1841, as one result of the war which broke out between Great Britain and China in 1839, and its cession was finally recognised by the Treaty of Nankin in 1842. At that time its population consisted of a few thousands of Chinese fishermen, since it was to all intents and purposes a barren island. So far were even competent judges from foreseeing its marvellous future, that in a valuable book on China written by R. M. Martin in 1847, there is a chapter called "Hongkong, its position, prospects, character, and utter worthlessness in every point of view to England." From the beginning, however, it has been the Aladdin's palace of commerce. The island itself has an area of only twenty-nine square miles, and the whole colony, including a couple of little islands and the strip of territory known as British Kowloon on the mainland exactly opposite, just over thirty-two. Kowloon constitutes our frontier with China in the Far East. It is two and one-third miles in length, and is guarded in a peculiar way. The duty on opium going into China is so high that the profits on smuggling it have always tempted the Chinese, the most expert smugglers in the world, to evade the Customs in any

way and at any risk. From the free port of Hongkong the greatest danger in this respect was to be apprehended. The Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs have a station at Kowloon, with the business office situated, for purposes of convenience, within the British colony. They have a small fleet of revenue cruisers to stop all junks and Chinese steamers, and they have built an impassable fence of bamboo, eight feet high, between British and Chinese territory. In this there are six gateways, each guarded by a post of revenue officers, while on the Chinese side there is a broad solid road ceaselessly patrolled night and day by a Customs force, consisting of over one hundred "braves" armed with loaded Winchester repeating-rifles, and under the command of six foreigners. To avoid possible frictions or collusions, these are all of non-British nationality. It is a curious fact, by the way, as will be seen from my photograph of the advanced French frontier-post at Monkay, that both England and France are separated from China by a rampart of bamboo, that strange and accommodating plant which serves more purposes than anything else that grows.

The situation of Hongkong has, of course, had most to do with its unexampled progress. It is the furthest eastern dependency of the Crown, and forms the end of the arm of the Empire which stretches round the south of Asia. The next step in advance northward will be forced upon us within a very short time by both commercial and strategical considerations, but nothing can seriously interfere with the importance of Hongkong as the next station north of Singapore, from which it is 1,400 miles. A coaling station and naval base at least a thousand miles further north has become a necessity if we are to hold our predominant position in the Far East, and for this purpose Port Hamilton will certainly not do. Hongkong is 79 miles from Canton, the greatest trading city of China, and an excellent service of daily steamers keeps the two in touch. Macao, of little and decreasing importance, is 40 miles away; the Philippines are 650; Saigon is 900;

Shanghai, 824; Bangkok, 1,454; Yokohama, 1,575; and Vladivostok, 1,670. The former barren and almost uninhabited island is thus the focus of the Far East to-day.

From a military and naval point of view Hongkong is one of the most important stations in the Empire. Its docks and machine-shops are worthy of its position, several large ships, and countless small ones, having been built and launched from them. The Admiralty dock is 500 feet long, 86 in breadth at the top and 70 at the bottom, and 29 feet deep. The land defences of the Colony consist of six divisions: Stonecutter's Island, Belcher's Bay, Kowloon West, North Point, Kowloon Dock, and Lyeemoon Fort. The armament of the chief of these consists of the justly-abused 10-inch and the admirable 9.2-inch guns. The place is probably quite impregnable from the sea on the harbour side, but to make sure there is need to fortify Green Island, since otherwise ships coming round the island would not be visible from Stonecutter's or Belcher's till they were almost in sight of the town. Any nation except our own would have fortified this point years ago. Hongkong is one of the few defences armed with the famous Watkins "position-finder," for which the British Government paid so much. By this all the guns of all the chief batteries can be aimed and fired by one man in a commanding and secure position. With the principal entrances mined—all preparations for which exist in the most complete and detailed manner—any hostile fleet attacking Hongkong harbour would in all human probability come utterly to grief. The weak point is well known to be on the other side. In the military manœuvres the attacking force has got in again and again. The redoubts are all planned, and there are plenty of machine-guns and a few howitzers, but with the large forces of infantry possessed by Russia in Siberia, and by France in Tongking, to say nothing of the powerful Japanese army, it is impossible to feel quite happy about Hongkong until its southern side is protected as well as its harbour. Especially is this the case if the common

remark of naval men, that in the event of war the fleet would at once put to sea and leave Hongkong to take care of itself, is to be taken literally.

To my thinking, however, Hongkong is in more danger from the Chinese than from any other quarter. Kowloon City is a mass of roughs; Canton is the most turbulent and most foreigner-hating city in China; 20,000 Chinese could come down to Hongkong in a few hours; and a strike of Chinese servants would starve out the Colony. Before Kowloon was added to the Colony, a Hongkong head was worth thirty dollars, and "braves" used to come down to try and get them. The defences have lately been increased by a regiment of Indian troops, with a strength of 10 British officers and 1,014 natives of all ranks, who were raised in a marvellously short time, and have been brought to a high point of discipline and efficiency, and besides these there is always a regiment of British troops and a force of engineers and garrison artillery stationed there. As an example, however, of the power of the Chinese, it may be remembered that when it was found necessary to isolate and fumigate the horrible Chinese quarters during the recent outbreak of plague in the Colony, this could only be done under the guns of the fleet, and the actual work was performed by British volunteers.* Asia—always excepting Japan—never has been civilised and never will be, till a greater change comes than this age is likely to see, otherwise than at the mouth of the cannon and the point of the bayonet. At home this statement will doubtless be regarded by many excellent people with feelings akin to horror, but all who know the East will know it to be true.

This question of the relations of foreigners and Chinese presents much the same general aspect in Hongkong as it does in Shanghai. Here, too, the Chinese merchant is

* It is to be hoped that the permanent committee of the Sanitary Board, and the soldiers, will receive some official recognition of their efforts, for it was chiefly by them that the plague was eradicated.

crowding out the British middleman; here, too, it cannot be very long before the bulk of the real estate of the Colony is owned by Chinese. Every day they are advancing further into the European quarter, and Chinese merchants are among the richest men in the community. "In every dispute between the Chinese and the Government," said a well-informed resident to me, "the former have come off victorious." By and by, therefore, we shall have virtually a Chinese society under the British flag, ruled by a British governor. Such is "Empire," and I see no particular reason to regret the fact, even if it were not impossible to do anything to alter it. The Empire depends upon trade first of all, and such a community must always form the strongest trading link between Great Britain and China. By means of trade alone the Empire stands for the welfare and civilisation of the greatest number, and these are undoubtedly to be found in the direction here prophesied. At any rate, whether we like it or not, and whether we welcome it or oppose it, this change is inevitable.*

Besides this "danger," however, if it be one, there is the real danger arising from the unruly and criminal Chinese. In spite of all denials, piracy is still rife in the waters round Hongkong. Chinese junks are the constant victims, and the eyes of the Colony were opened in 1890 by the piracy of the British steamer *Namoa*, which was seized by her Chinese passengers, two of her officers and a number of her crew shot, the remaining officers and European passengers imprisoned in the cabin, like another "Black Hole," for eight hours, the captain dying there, the loot transferred into six junks which came alongside at a signal, and then abandoned, after the windlass had been broken, the fires drawn, the lifeboats stove

* To escape being misunderstood, let me make it quite clear that I think this Chinese progress absolutely dependent upon British guidance and control, both political and commercial, and ask that what precedes and follows about the Chinese in our Colonies may be read in connection with my chapters about the Chinese in China.

in, and the side-lights thrown overboard. A long time afterwards a number of men were beheaded in Kowloon for the piracy, among them being at least one man who had been concerned in the piracy of the *Greyhound* years before. Only a few months ago disturbances broke out in Hongkong between the members of two rival clans, the Sze Yap and the Tun Kun, and work among many coolies was suspended for a time in consequence, and many steamers delayed. The police were kept very active and the military under arms, while a guerilla warfare was carried on among the rival clans, "the combatants watching for victims of the opposite party, and attacking them individually in quiet places, or shooting them from the tops of houses." Another piece of terrorism occurred when five hundred men employed on the new reservoir were frightened from their work. "A military procession," said a local paper, "with a few small dragons in the shape of field and Maxim guns, would probably exercise a wholesome influence upon the Cantonese swashbucklers who now fancy they can work their own sweet will in this British Colony." Hongkong is in fact, an Arcadia for the criminals of the neighbouring province, who first plan their outrages there and then take refuge in it when their *coup* has been effected. If the hue and cry after them becomes too hot, they commit some small offence against the laws of the Colony, with the view to getting committed to prison for a few months, under which circumstances they are absolutely safe against the pursuit of detectives from their own country. Even if they are discovered, arrested, and formally charged, the difficulties in the way of their rendition are so great that they have a good chance of getting off after all. For as the British authorities know very well that torture and punishment await all whom they give up, they are naturally chary of handing prisoners over, notwithstanding any assurances of fair trial that may be given, and they therefore insist that a man shall be proved guilty *prima facie* before he is surrendered, with the result that the Chinese authorities regard British law as a

means whereby their own criminals escape punishment, as many of them undoubtedly do.

The population of Hongkong in 1893 was 238,724, of whom the whites were 8,545, the Indians 1,901, and the Chinese 210,995. This included the strength of the garrison. In addition there was a boat-population of no fewer than 32,035 Chinese. The expenditure of the Colony was 1,920,523 dols., and its revenue 2,078,135 dols.,* the latter showing a net decrease of 158,000 dols. and the former of 422,000 dols. The assets of the Colony are put down at 2,417,054 dols., and its liabilities at 928,031 dols. Its military contribution is £40,000, paid in quarterly instalments. The ascending scale of Colonial contribution in the present state of silver may be judged from the statement that the four quarters of 1893 were paid in the following amounts of dollars—72,000, 72,000, 75,000, and 77,000, and that for 1894 the total will amount to 400,000 dols., or one-fifth of the entire revenue. Hongkong being a free port there

* It is useless to attempt to translate these figures into sterling, as explained in footnotes elsewhere. During 1893 the Mexican dollar fell from 2s. 8⅛d. to 2s. 3¾d., and now stands at 2s. 1¾d., with entire uncertainty as to the future. The Chambers of Commerce of Hongkong and Singapore have petitioned in favour of a British dollar, and it seems clear that such a coin should be introduced. There is not the slightest reason for the persistence of the Mexican dollar, and many against it, and a British dollar is the only alternative to the legalisation of the Japanese *yen*, the objections to which are too obvious to mention. It is preposterous that the Power doing beyond all comparison a preponderance of trade with the Far East should be dependent upon foreign coins like the Mexican dollar and Japanese *yen*. A British dollar, now a rare coin, was introduced in 1866, but time was not allowed for its general acceptance, and the Hongkong mint was closed two years later and its machinery sold to Japan. (See Chalmers's "History of Currency in the British Colonies," pp. 375 *sqq.*—a work of great industry and ability.) The British dollar should, of course, be the metallic counterpart of the familiar "Mexican," and it is to be hoped that among the opportunities for reform offered by the results of the present Japanese war with China, this question may not fail of solution. As an example of the inconvenience now prevailing I may add that when I was preparing for the exploration of the unknown north of the Malay Peninsula, of which an account is given in a later chapter of this book, I was indebted to the courtesy of the Penang branch of the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China for a supply of the old "pillar" dollars which alone are accepted there, and that I had to pay a premium of nine per cent. for them. [Since the above was in type, the coinage of a British dollar has been sanctioned.]

are no custom-house statistics available, but the record of shipping gives some idea of the trade of this astounding place. The total shipping entered and cleared in 1893 was 14,023,866 tons, of which the British flag covered 7,732,195 tons. This is already an extraordinary proportion, but a little investigation shows it to be far more striking than thus appears. The non-British shipping of the Port of Hongkong remains from the above figures at 6,291,671 tons, but of this Chinese ships carried 4,389,551 tons. Excluding Chinese ships, therefore, the British shipping trade of Hongkong was 7,732,195 tons, against 1,902,120 tons carried by all other foreign nations put together.

In spite of all its commercial progress, however, and its vital position in the Empire, Hongkong is in many respects curiously behind the civilisation of its time. One may say roughly, for instance, that the law of the Colony to-day is the law—both Common and Statute—that was in force in England on April 5, 1843. I saw several Europeans in Hongkong gaol for debt. There is no Married Women's Property Act in force, although this actually exists in Chinese law. There is no copyright for British authors under their own flag, and I saw the counters of the foreign booksellers crowded with pirated reprints of contemporary authors. An Englishman living in the foreign settlement at Canton—Shameen—is under one law; an Englishman living in Hongkong under another. Hongkong is still—or to be quite exact, was when I was last there—under the Bankruptcy Acts of 1849 and 1861. A petition had been presented, signed by all the Chinese merchants of the Colony, suggesting amendments suitable to local circumstances, but the authorities would have none of them, so it was referred home, and the Secretary of State ordered the suggestions to be introduced. This was already six years ago, and nothing had been done. The amalgamation of Law and Equity has never been introduced in fact, whatever may have happened in theory. "Our law," said a leading local lawyer to me, "is antediluvian. You cannot even get a copy of the Hongkong Ordinances—that is, of the

complete law of the Colony. If Hongkong had not been blessed with reasonable judges, we could never have got on at all." Hongkong has long desired a Municipality, to deal with all local matters except such—the defences, for example—as are of a purely Imperial nature, but this justifiable ambition has been snubbed again and again. A growing dissatisfaction, however, has been shown with the system of official and unofficial membership of the Legislative Council. The former all vote as they are required by the Governor, and the latter are in a minority The official members once showed some signs of voting according to their own views, but the Governor promptly put his foot down upon such insubordination. "Gentlemen," he said to the official members at the next Council meeting, "you are quite at liberty to speak and vote as you like; but if, holding official positions, you oppose the government, it will be the duty of the government to inquire whether it is for its advantage that you should continue to hold those positions." Official salaries, therefore, are consequent on official votes. Among my notes about Hongkong I find this remark was made to me: "An official member has never made a full and free speech on any subject since Hongkong was a Colony." The spirit of free criticism, however, has now sprung up, thanks chiefly to the independence and tenacity of one unofficial member, the Hon. T. H. Whitehead. From the time of his election, five years ago, as the representative of the Chamber of Commerce, he has refused, in spite of every species of pressure and influence, to fall into line with the old tradition which prescribes that the unofficial member should make a speech, including a mild protest in extreme cases, accept with a deferential bow the Governor's assurance that "the honourable member's remarks shall not fail to receive every consideration," and then let the matter drop. Mr. Whitehead, on the contrary, has been unkind enough to make the lives of government officials burdens to them by his insistence upon explanations, justifications, facts, statistics, records and appeals to

the higher authorities in England. It is not supposed, to adapt Mr. Kipling's amusing verse, to be good for the health of an unofficial member to hustle a Colonial Governor, but Mr. Whitehead has thriven greatly in the exercise. He holds a position which gives him an intimate knowledge of the affairs and finances of the Colony, and it is doing him bare justice to say that he is on the way to revolutionise the management of official matters. He is strongly supported by the commercial community, whose interests he thoroughly understands, and the Chinese gave him such farewell honours when he left the Colony the other day for a holiday in Europe as have never been seen there before.

Mr. Whitehead has devoted himself to exposing the weakness and defects of the existing system of government and the constitution of the Legislative Council, and has just brought home a petition, signed by nearly ninety per cent. of the British ratepayers, praying for a measure of local self-government equal to that possessed by the smallest community at home and by colonies abroad with not a fraction of the wealth, importance, or experience of Hongkong. This petition explains the position of the unofficial inhabitants of the Colony so clearly, and sets forth their grievances so temperately, that I cannot do better than reproduce it almost *in extenso*, especially as its prayer will have to be granted sooner or later. It runs as follows:—

It is a little over fifty years since the Colony was founded on a barren rock, the abode of a few fishermen and pirates. To-day it is a city and settlement with upwards of a quarter of a million inhabitants; a trade estimated at about forty millions of pounds sterling per annum, and a revenue of some two millions of dollars, wholly derived from internal taxation. Hongkong is a free port, through which passes upwards of fourteen millions of tons of shipping per annum, and it ranks amongst the very first in the list of the great seaports in Her Majesty's dominions. It is the centre of enormous British interests, and is an extensive emporium of British trade in the China seas, and, while it remains a free port, it is destined to expand and develop, and to continue to be the centre of vast traffic and of constant communication between Europe, the Australian Colonies, the United States, and Canada on the one hand, and China, Japan, the Philippine Islands, British North Borneo, Java, Indo-China, Siam, the Straits, and India on the other.

Hongkong has attained to its almost unequalled commercial position, through the enterprise, skill, and energy of British merchants, traders, and shipowners;

through the labours of Her Majesty's subjects who have spent their lives and employed their capital on its shores; through the expenditure of many millions of dollars in roads, streets, and bridges; in buildings, public and private; in extensive reclamations; in docks, piers, and wharves; and last, but not least, in manufactures of great and increasing value. The prosperity of the Colony can best be maintained by the unremitting exertions and self-sacrifice of your Petitioners and the valuable co-operation and support of the Chinese, and only by the continuance of Hongkong as a free port.

Notwithstanding that the whole interests of your Petitioners are thus inextricably and permanently bound up in the good administration of the Colony, in the efficiency of its Executive, and the soundness of its finance, your Petitioners are allowed to take only a limited part or small share in the government of the Colony, and are not permitted to have any really effective voice in the management of its affairs, external or internal. Being purely a Crown Colony, it is governed by a Governor appointed by Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, and by an Executive and a Legislative Council. The former is composed wholly of Officers of the Crown, nominated and appointed by the Crown; the latter consists of seven Official Members, selected and appointed by the Queen, and five Unofficial Members, two of whom are nominated by certain public bodies in the Colony, while the other three are selected by the Governor, and all are appointed by Her Majesty.

The Executive Council sits and deliberates in secret. The Legislative Council sits with open doors, and its procedure appears to admit of full and unfettered discussion, but there is virtually no true freedom of debate. Questions are considered, and settled, and the policy to be adopted by the Government in connection therewith is decided in the Executive Council. They are then brought before the Legislative Council, where the Government—the Official Members being in a majority—can secure the passing of any measure, in face of any opposition on the part of the Unofficial Members, who are thus limited to objecting and protesting, and have no power to carry any proposal which they may consider beneficial, nor have they power to reject or even modify any measure which may in their opinion be prejudicial to the interests of the Colony.

In the adjustment and disposal of the Colonial revenue it might be supposed that the Unofficial representatives of the taxpayers would be allowed a potential voice, and in form this has been conceded by the Government. But only in form, for in the Finance Committee, as well as in the Legislative Council, the Unofficial Members are in a minority, and can therefore be out-voted if any real difference of opinion arises.

Legislative Enactments are nearly always drafted by the Attorney General, are frequently forwarded before publication in the Colony or to the Council for the approval of the Secretary of State, and when sanctioned are introduced into the Legislative Council, read a first, second, and third time, and passed by the votes of the Official Members, acting in obedience to instructions, irrespective of their personal views or private opinions.

The Legislation so prepared and passed emanates in some cases from persons whose short experience of and want of actual touch with the Colony's needs, does not qualify them to fully appreciate the measures best suited to the requirements of the Community.

Those who have the knowledge and experience are naturally the Unofficial Members, who have been elected and appointed as possessing these very qualifications, who have passed large portions of their lives in the Colony, and who either

have permanent personal interests in it, or hold prominent positions of trust which connect them most closely with its affairs, and are therefore the more likely to have been required to carefully study its real needs, and to have thoroughly acquainted themselves with the methods by which these are best to be met. On the other hand the offices occupied by the Official Members are only stepping stones in an official career; the occupants may be resident for a longer or a shorter period in the Colony, and for them to form an opinion on any question which arises, different from that decided upon by the Government in Executive Council, is to risk a conflict with the Governor, and they are therefore compelled to vote on occasions contrary to their convictions.

Your Petitioners humbly represent that to Malta, Cyprus, Mauritius, British Honduras, and other Crown Colonies, more liberal forms of Government than those enjoyed by your Petitioners have been given: unofficial seats in the Executive Council; unofficial majorities in the Legislative Council; power of election of Members of Council; and more power and influence in the management of purely local affairs: in none of these Colonies are the commercial and industrial interests of the same magnitude or importance as those of Hongkong. Your Petitioners, therefore, pray your Honourable House to grant them the same or similar privileges.

Your Petitioners fully recognise that in a Colony so peculiarly situated on the borders of a great Oriental Empire, and with a population largely composed of aliens whose traditional and family interests and racial sympathies largely remain in that neighbouring Empire, special legislation and guardianship are required. Nor are they less alive to the Imperial position of a Colony which is at once a frontier fortress and a naval depôt, the headquarters of Her Majesty's fleet, and the base for naval and military operations in these Far Eastern waters; and they are not so unpractical as to expect that unrestricted power should be given to any local Legislature, or that the Queen's Government could ever give up the paramount control of this important dependency. All your Petitioners claim is the common right of Englishmen to manage their local affairs, and control the expenditure of the Colony, where Imperial considerations are not involved.

At present your Petitioners are subject to legislation issuing from the Imperial Parliament, and all local legislation must be subsidiary to it. Her Majesty the Queen in Council has full and complete power and authority to make laws for the island, and local laws must be approved and assented to by the Governor in the name of the Queen, and are subject to disallowance by Her Majesty on the recommendation of Her Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies.

Your Petitioners recognise the necessity and propriety of the existence of these checks and safeguards against the abuse of any power and authority exercised by any local Legislature, and cheerfully acquiesce in their continuance and effective exercise, but respectfully submit that, subject to these checks and safeguards, they ought to be allowed the free election of representatives of British nationality in the Legislative Council of the Colony; a majority in the Council of such elected representatives; perfect freedom of debate for the Official Members, with power to vote according to their conscientious convictions without being called to account or endangered in their positions by their votes; complete control in the Council over local expenditure; the management of local affairs; and a consultative voice in questions of an Imperial character.

This power to control purely local affairs is but the common right of every Englishman, and to deny it to Hongkong—the

absolute authority of the Crown over all purely Imperial matters being safeguarded—is without a shadow of justification. Besides being signed, as I have said, by ninety per cent. of the British ratepayers, this petition has the strongest support of the entire Chinese community, who pay nine-tenths of the whole taxation. The inhabitants of Hongkong claim that nothing could have shown more clearly the necessity for municipal government than the muddle made by the Government in dealing with the plague. This cost Hongkong a million dollars, thousands of lives, many thousands of its Chinese inhabitants, and inflicted a loss hardly calculable upon its vast shipping interests. Much of all this, it is declared, could have been saved by proper management. As an example of a state of things against which the Hongkong press and the unofficial members of Council have constantly protested, it may be pointed out that at this most critical period of the Colony's history it was administered by a Government most of whose officials were "acting" men, and many of them, therefore, necessarily less competent than the holders of their offices should be. "Why is it," asked the *Daily Press*, "that so large a number of officials can claim leave all at once? . . . It should not be possible for any administration to become so depleted of its responsible members as this Colony is at the present moment." Without the actual list of the "acting" officers the state of affairs would not be believed. It is as follows: Acting Colonial Secretary, Acting Chief Justice, Acting Puisne Judge, Acting Attorney General, Acting Director of Public Works (an untried junior), Acting Assistant Registrar General (who was really Acting Registrar General), Acting Clerk of Councils, Acting Postmaster General, Acting Police Magistrate, Acting Clerk to Magistrates, Acting Sanitary Superintendent, Acting Superintendent of Civil Hospitals, Acting Assessor of Rates, Acting Registrar, and Acting Deputy Registrar. This list by itself is enough to show that something is seriously wrong. By appealing single-handed to the Home Government, over the

heads of the Governor and his officials, Mr. Whitehead has also obtained the appointment of a Retrenchment Commission, of which it has been truly remarked that if its recommendations bear any resemblance to the Report just issued by a similar Commission in the neighbouring Colony of the Straits Settlements, which has recommended economies to the extent of nearly a quarter of a million dollars *per annum*, Hongkong will have reason to be thankful.

Above all other considerations and criticisms, however, it is the greatness of this outpost on the edge of the Empire that must always finally recur to any Englishman who has studied it. I doubt if there can be a more remarkable view in the world than that of the city of Victoria and the ten square miles of Hongkong harbour from "The Peak." At night it is as if you had mounted above the stars and were looking down upon them, for the riding-lights of the ships seem suspended in an infinite gulf of darkness, while every now and then the white beam of an electric search-light flashes like the track of a meteor across a midnight sky. By day, the city is spread out nearly 2,000 feet directly below you, and only the ships' decks and their foreshortened masts are visible, while the whole surface of the harbour is traversed continually in all directions by fast steam-launches, making a network of tracks like lacework upon it, as water-spiders skim over a pool in summer-time. For Hongkong harbour, as I have said, is the focus of the traffic of the East, though what this means one cannot realise until one has looked down many times into its secure blue depths and noted all that is there—the great mail liners, the P. & O., the Messageries Maritimes, the North German Lloyd, the Austrian Lloyd, the Occidental and Oriental, the Pacific Mail, and the Canadian Pacific; the smaller mail packets, to Tongking, to Formosa, to Borneo, to Manila, and to Siam; the ocean "tramps" ready to get up steam at a moment's notice and carry anything anywhere; the white-winged sailing-vessels resting after

their long flights; the innumerable high-sterned junks plying to every port on the Chinese coast; and all the mailed host of men-of-war flying every flag under heaven, from the white ensign of the flagship and the black eagle of its Russian rival, to the yellow crown of the tiny Portuguese gunboat or the dragon pennant of China. On one day, the Governor told me, no fewer than two hundred and forty guns were fired in salutes in the harbour. All these vessels cross and recross ceaselessly in Hongkong harbour, living shuttles in the loom of time, bearing the golden strand of human sympathy and co-operation between world and world, or like the Zeitgeist in *Faust*, "weaving the garment divinity wears." I am not prepared to say that divinity would always find itself comfortable in the garment that is woven in Hongkong, but one thing I can affirm, and that is that a visit to our furthest Colony makes one proud to belong to the nation that has created it from nothing, fills the word "Empire" with a new-born meaning, and crystallises around it a set of fresh convictions and resolves.

CHAPTER II.

A SCHOOL OF EMPIRE: THE STRAITS SETTLEMENTS.

SINGAPORE, says an old chronicler, "presents to the eye of the voyager a scene that has repeatedly excited the most rapturous admiration." The rapture probably began with the descendant of Alexander the Great, who—the story goes—came over from Sumatra and founded it, the first Malay settlement on the Peninsula, exactly a century after the battle of Hastings, naming it Singhapura, "The City of the Lion," from a lion-like beast he saw on landing. Camoens felt the rapture, too, when he sang—

> "But on her Land's end framed see Cingapur,
> Where the wide sea-road shrinks to narrow way;
> Thence curves the coast to face the Cynosure,
> And lastly trends Auroraward its lay."

And diluted to the thinner consistency of a less impressionable age, the same rapture is experienced by every traveller who enters the harbour. But his eye soon falls from the setting of exquisite green hills to the marvellous multi-coloured wharf of Babel awaiting the touch of the steamer. There Malay jostles Chinaman, Kling rubs shoulders with Javanese, Arab elbows Seedy-boy, and Dyak stares at Bugis, all their dirty bodies swathed either in nothing to speak of, or else in scarlet and yellow and blue and gold. Among them a dainty English lady, come to meet her husband or brother or lover, her eyes full of laughter or tears, and her face flushed with anticipation, looks

so white and fair and frail that one marvels in pride at the thought that she and such as she are the mothers of men who impose the restraints and the incitements of Empire upon the millions of these dark races of the earth.

If it is unnecessary to describe Shanghai and Hongkong, because of the hosts of people who visit them and the superabundance of books which discuss them, still less is it needful to give a detailed account of Singapore. The Colony, however, has several points of interest peculiar to itself, besides those which it shares with other parts of the Far East, and though a glance at the latter will suffice, the former call for consideration at greater length. Singapore is interesting for its remarkably beautiful situation; for its history, so full of vicissitudes and bloodshed until it finally came under the administration of Bengal in July, 1830—as an example of vicissitudes, Malacca was captured by us from the Dutch in 1786, restored in 1801, retaken in 1807, restored in 1818, resumed for good in 1825; for its geographical situation as the extreme southern limit of continental Asia, and the "corner" between the Far East and the rest of the world; for the fact that it was the first free-trade port of modern times; and very interesting, of course, as one of the keystones of Imperial defence. To a casual observer, however, Singapore does not present such striking features as many other places. The business town is two or three miles away from most of the private residences; these are not in groups but in units, each solitary in its own charming grounds; you cannot make a call under half an hour's drive, and until you have learned a little Malay it is a most difficult community in which to find your way about; and the Club is practically closed at seven o'clock, and if you make arrangements to dine there, your single lighted table only emphasises the surrounding darkness.

This evergreen island, almost on the equator, where neither Christmas nor Midsummer Day brings much change to the thermometer, and in whose tropical jungles the cobra and

hamadryad live and a stray tiger is occasionally found, is the seat of a large number of very ticklish problems of government, and the visitor would be surprised indeed if he could see for a moment, through the eyes of the Governor of the Straits Settlements, the variety and responsibility of the questions requiring decision and action every day. It is a singularly complicated problem, to begin with, to govern the city itself, with its six thousand Europeans and Americans (including the garrison), its four thousand Eurasians, its four thousand Javanese, its sixteen thousand Indians, chiefly Klings (natives of India, from the Coromandel coast), its thirty thousand Malays, its hundred and twenty thousand Chinese and all its mixed mass of Bengalis and Bugis, Jawi Pekans and Boyanese and Burmese, Persians and Arabs and Dyaks and Manilamen. These native peoples are quiet enough when left alone, but a single unpopular ordinance is sufficient to bring them rioting into the streets. A few years ago Singapore was in the hands of a mob for two days—in fact, until the government gave way—because it was decided to make the causeways clear for passengers. The city used to be the headquarters of several of the principal Chinese Secret Societies, the most inscrutable and ruthless and law-upsetting organisations in the world. These were suppressed by formal enactment on the initiative of Sir Cecil Smith, four years ago, and a "Chinese Advisory Board" created to deal with their legitimate work, but it may well be doubted whether a system to which the Chinese have an irrepressible tendency has not been made more secret rather than extirpated. Mr. Wray, the "Protector of Chinese," in his latest report, says that "sporadic attempts are still made, and will always be made where Chinese congregate in large numbers, to start illegal organisations," but he believes, or perhaps one should say, hopes, that "secrecy is impossible amid a heterogeneous society like ours, and incessant vigilance and prompt action on the part of the Chinese Protectorate are all that is necessary in such cases." The chief societies were the Ghee Hin, the Ghee Hok, and the Hok Hin. The former

was the original and the most powerful one, and when it was suppressed, after great difficulty and many disputes among its members concerning the distribution of its property, its membership in Singapore was thirty thousand and in Penang forty thousand. The other two have been "registered" and permitted, as they are ostensibly only Chinese mutual benefit societies. There is still not the slightest doubt, however, that they stand between their members and the foreign law. Professional bailers attend the courts to bail out any member of their society, and they help their members in all sorts of ways to flee from justice. A chapter, and a most romantic one too, might be written about these societies. They have, for example, the most elaborate system of signs for mutual recognition. One of them bases its signs upon the numeral three. At table, a member wishing to make himself known to any fellow-member present places three glasses together in a certain way, or passes a cup of tea held peculiarly with three fingers. A man fleeing from justice and praying for refuge, puts his shoes outside another's house, side by side, with the heels turned towards the door. If the owner turns one shoe over on the other, the fugitive knows he can take refuge there. In spite of the suppression, I fancy that *Hoan Cheng Hok Beng*—"Upset Cheng," the present Manchu dynasty of China, "restore Beng," the former dynasty—still has a magic and compelling significance in Singapore, for these are the pass-words of the famous Triad Society, which honeycombs China and has more than once put the throne in terror. The Triad consists of the characters *Thien Tay Hoey*—"Heaven, Earth, Man."

To appreciate Singapore as a city of Orientals, one must spend a day or two in the native quarters, and this is just what the ordinary visitor fails to do. From this point of view it is certainly one of the most astonishing communities in the world. To begin with, it is enormous. For days you may wander about without ever turning on your track, through miles upon miles of semi-native houses and shops, through crowded

streets, in variegated bazaars, with all the merchandise of all the East spread out endlessly before you. Each race has its own quarter—there is "Kampong Malacca," "Kampong Kling," "Kampong Siam," "Kampong China." In one spot you are dazzled with the silks of India; in another the *sarongs* of Java are spread out like a kaleidoscope; in another you are suffocated with an indescribable mixture of Eastern scents; in another an appalling stench meets you, strange rainbow-like birds utter raucous cries, and the long thin hairy arm of a gorilla is stretched out between bamboo bars in deceptive friendliness; in another there is such a packed mass of boats that you hardly know when your foot has left dry land. And all this mixed humanity exists in order and security and sanitation, living and thriving and trading, simply because of the presence of English law and under the protection of the British flag. Remove that piece of bunting from Government House, and all that it signifies, and the whole community would go to pieces like a child's sand-castle when the tide rises. Its three supports are free trade, fair taxation, and even-handed justice among white, black, brown and yellow, and these exist in the Far East under the British flag alone. At least, I have been almost everywhere else without finding them. Of course, in all this the Chinese enormously preponderate. The foolish opinion is sometimes heard at home that this Chinese community represents China—that it is a specimen of what China may become, a standing bond of union between ourselves and China. The very opposite is the case. This community has grown up and exists precisely because it is *not* China—because the conditions of its existence are precisely the antithesis of Chinese conditions. The Straits Chinaman would not exchange his British nationality for anything else in the world; he plays cricket, football, and lawn tennis; he has his annual athletic sports; the recreation ground, and indeed every open space, is covered in the afternoons with Chinese engaged in these games; he goes to the Free Library and he reads the newspaper; he

attends a Debating Society and he carries off prizes at the Raffles School; he eats foreign food and imitates foreign vices. When he has prospered he drives through the streets in a carriage and pair with a European coachman on the box. He knows that he is the equal of the Englishman before the law, and considers that he is slightly superior to him in other respects. He looks upon the Civil Service as *his* servants, upon the Governor as *his* ruler, upon the forts as *his* protection, upon the whole place as *his* home. A Chinaman is one of the most influential members of the Legislative Council.

Mr. George C. Wray, the Protector of Chinese, whom I have already quoted above, writes as follows in his last report: "We have developed an ever-growing, permanent, law-abiding, Straits-born population, who are proud of being British subjects, give their children a liberal English education, and are rapidly consolidating themselves into a distinctive, loyal subject-race, of whose abilities and behaviour our Government may well be proud." The number of these Straits-born Chinese, according to the census of 1891, was 12,805 in Singapore, and 34,757 for the whole Colony, and they are rapidly increasing. The business of the European firms—and this is true of almost the whole Far East—could not be carried on for a week without their Chinese "shroffs," "compradors," and clerks. Between the census of 1881 and that of 1891 the Chinese inhabitants of Singapore had increased from 86,766 to 121,908. During the year 1893 there were no fewer than 144,558 Chinese immigrants into Singapore alone, to say nothing of the 68,751 who went to Penang, to which the same remarks apply. It is therefore not surprising that even the lethargic Chinese Imperial Government has at last been struck with this new and strange China growing up under a foreign flag, and that it has despatched commissioners to inquire into the reasons why Chinese who make money in the Straits never come back to their own land, and has published an invitation to its self-exiled citizens to return, and an order to its own officials to refrain from interfering with

them when they do so. The hilarious scorn, however, with which this invitation has been received, and the almost brutal frankness of the reasons given in reply to the inquiries, show at the same time the value the well-governed Chinaman sets upon his privileges, and his opinion of the prospects of reform—even when backed by Imperial command—in his native land. Even to the Chinese woman who is a prostitute in China, Singapore is by comparison a paradise. Mr. Wray says: "There being no supervision or means of redress in China, women of the lower classes better themselves by coming to a land where debt-slavery is not tolerated and where the mere act of reporting to the nearest official means immediate freedom." *

* It would not be fitting to discuss here the whole question of the relations of the prostitute class to the Colonial authorities, but I must put my opinion on record somewhere in this book. I am profoundly convinced, after much study of statistics and careful investigation into the question in the Far East, that the action of Parliament and the Colonial Office in over-riding the repeated requests and protests of the highest and most responsible local authorities is so seriously wrong that the word "blunder" is wholly inadequate to describe it. From the point of view of morality it is as wrong as from the point of view of administration it is improper. The conditions of life and character are so utterly different in Europe and Asia that any comparison between them for the purpose of justifying recent legislation is not only impossible but absolutely ridiculous. What may be wise and imperative laws for the women of Europe, may quite well be wrong in every respect for the women of Asia. Hongkong and Singapore were in this respect two of the healthiest communities in the world; they are rapidly becoming, if indeed they are not already, centres for the propagation and distribution of pestilence. From this the native society and the British garrisons suffer in identical proportions. As for the fate of the unfortunate women themselves, the pen of Dante would be required to describe what it will soon become again. To the familiar horrors of the slave-trade, add an equal amount of other and indescribable horror, and you will have some notion of what life will be for the thousands of Chinese women under the British flag but without its protection. Anybody who desires to inform himself upon the normal condition of Eastern prostitutes should pursue inquiries into the lot of the young women who are sold into this slavery, even by the female members of the Siamese royal family, and who pass a great part of their lives in the district of Bangkok known as Sampeng, behind barred windows and padlocked doors, from which they never emerge until, dead or alive, they leave the place for good. The action of Parliament and the Colonial Office has simply condemned thousands of Chinese women to a fate of almost unimaginable woe, from a great part of which they were previously shielded. As the Protector of Chinese in Singapore says, to suppress the evil altogether is utterly impossible, though it may be greatly mitigated. All that this legislation does is to afford a certain relief to the consciences of partially informed people at home, at the cost of enormous and unnecessary suffering to

The Straits Settlements, which were incorporated as a Crown Colony in 1867, having previously been under the jurisdiction of the East India Company, consist of the large island of Singapore; the smaller island of Penang; Malacca and Province Wellesley on the mainland; another strip of territory and the island of Pangkor—together known as the Dindings; the Cocos Islands, and Christmas Island. The three latter call for no special mention; Province Wellesley is a sugar-growing district, which may become of importance if a railway runs into the inland side of it; and Malacca is reposing, after its varied history and its former prosperity as the outlet of the products of the Peninsula, in a condition of peaceful stagnation. Its colourless condition is well typified by its sole product—tapioca, produced in large quantities by Chinese labour and capital. Commercially, as the Governor has recently said, it is "a mere suburb of Singapore," and it will remain so until the Chinese develop its strip of very fertile land, which its own Malay inhabitants are far too lazy to do. Camoens wrote of—

> "Malacca's market grand and opulent,
> Whither each Province of the long seaboard
> Shall send of merchantry rich varied hoard."

Three centuries ago Malacca was "the great emporium of the Eastern Archipelago." * But its walls were "blown up at great expense in 1807," and its history virtually ceased long ago. There are compensations, however, for the quaint and quiet little place, for its Resident Councillor has just described it as "a favourable example of a prosperous agricultural district, where crime is almost unknown and the people are happy and contented." Penang, on the contrary, has been a discontented community lately. Singapore has

many thousands of natives in the Colonies. And it is of no use for the people who hold a contrary opinion to denounce those who express this one, having formed it after conscientious inquiries favoured by unusual opportunities.

* Lucas: "Historical Geography of the British Colonies," I. 107—a work of which it would be impossible to speak too highly.

inevitably taken away much of the advantageous trade Penang formerly enjoyed with the neighbouring Protected States; it claims that it has contributed more than its fair share toward Colonial expenditure, and received less for its own purposes; and it has been refused the large amount it desired for the erection of wharves. Much bitterness between the two chief partners in the Colony has thus been aroused, and a wordy war in paper and pamphlet, and even in Parliament, has followed. The Government also declined to grant the Royal Commission of inquiry which Penang desired. According to the Acting Governor's annual report, however, this discussion is now at an end. Mr. Maxwell writes: "A number of real or supposed grievances were also ventilated, but when the chief ground of complaint had been proved by a reference to statistics to be without foundation, the agitation, to which some of the Penang Chinese had somewhat blindly given their support, rapidly died away." It is probable that the growing influence of the Chinese, which is even truer of Penang than of Shanghai or Hongkong, and the great depression of trade, were as much as anything else the causes of the discontent of Penang. Last year the expenditure of the municipality exceeded the revenue by 17,000 dols., and the cash balance was reduced from 24,107 to 6,860 dols., while its municipal indebtedness is 350,000 dols. This, however, is a very small matter compared with the fact that the revenue of Penang, as a whole, has increased yearly since the "low-water mark" of 1891 by 3,000,000 dols., and this although no new sources of revenue have been established. And the figures of Penang's trade, 87,603,854 dols., are the highest for the past five years. The outlook, therefore, does not warrant any particular depression of spirits. In regard to the question of municipal expenditure (for all parts of the Straits Settlements have their municipalities, unlike Hongkong, which is still in official leading-strings), I may add that in every case, and not in that of Penang alone, the expenditure last year exceeded the revenue. With regard to Singapore, a few statistics are of much

interest. The total trade for 1893, excluding the movements of treasure, was 260,982,169 dols., an increase over 1892 of more than 26,000,000 dols. In spite of this, however, owing to the depreciation of silver, these same figures for the two years, translated into sterling at the average rates for each year, give £37,135,141 for 1892, and £36,769,590 for 1893—a silver increase of 26,000,000 dols. thus appearing as a gold decrease of £365,551! It would be difficult to find a more striking object-lesson of the position of a silver-using colony in regard to a gold-using mother country. That the trade of Singapore is healthy enough, apart from the question of silver, is evident from the shipping returns, which were 6,944,346 tons entered and cleared in 1893, an increase of nearly half a million tons over 1892.

In the finances of Singapore, however, one question far outweighs in importance, both Imperial and Colonial, all others—that of the military contribution. Upon this matter Singapore has been on the verge of revolt—hardly too strong an expression to describe the bitterness aroused in the Colony by the action of the home authorities. This is the more to be regretted since to an outsider studying the dispute it seems eminently one which could have been amicably settled by a compromise. When the Straits Settlements desired to be removed from the jurisdiction of India in 1867, and formed into a Crown Colony, the British Government assented on the understanding that the Colony should bear the cost of its own defence. At this time, however, there was a distinction made between the troops and their accommodation at Singapore, Malacca, and Penang, for the defence of those places; and other troops and their cost and accommodation at Singapore, for Imperial purposes—the latter being maintained by the home Government. Up to 1890, the Colony had paid a yearly contribution of £50,145 towards its defence, but in that year the Secretary of State for the Colonies suddenly demanded that the contribution be raised at once to £100,000 per annum, with an addition, first, of £28,976, being one-half of the

alleged loss of the Imperial Treasury by exchange on previous payments; and second, of an indefinite sum for further barracks. Now here, beyond any possible doubt, the Colonial Office made an initial blunder. Admitting that an increased contribution was necessary, and admitting that the sum asked for was entirely just, to send a peremptory demand that it be voted immediately by the Legislative Council, without having extended the courtesy of an inquiry beforehand as to the views of the Colony upon a matter so seriously affecting its income, was an act to arouse resentment in the most loyal community in the world. Its instant result might have been foreseen by the least imaginative person. The Governor of the Straits, Sir Cecil Smith, passed the vote as ordered. "For my own part," he wrote to Lord Knutsford, "I found myself wholly unable to conscientiously support the justice of all the claims which Her Majesty's Government had made, and the same views which I held were shared in by every member of my Council. My instructions, however, were perfectly clear, and I had to require each member of the Executive Council to vote against his conviction and in support of the claims of Her Majesty's Government." And in reporting the vote, he wrote: "It is very important that I should not omit to point out that the course which has been followed on this occasion has placed the Executive in very strained relations with the Legislative authority, and has tended to imperil good government. The constituted authorities in this Colony have been required by Her Majesty's Government to meet a money claim without having had an opportunity of having their views on the justice and correctness of the claim considered. Such a case is, so far as I am aware, wholly without precedent." In studying the history of British colonial administration, the student occasionally comes across acts on the part of the mother country which might have been inspired by some demon of mischief, so deliberately unfortunate do they seem. The method of this demand is one of them.

Protests, appeals, minutes, and resolutions of public meetings,

were of no avail, and Lord Knutsford simply replied that "Her Majesty's Government would have been glad if they could have allowed themselves to be influenced by arguments put forward so temperately and so fully;" and somewhat sarcastically added he had learnt "with satisfaction" that the Colony had included a similar vote in the estimates for the ensuing year. For the four years ending December 31, 1893, therefore, the Straits paid a regular contribution of £100,000 a year, during which time the Colonial revenue was further decreased by depression of trade and dislocated by the fall of silver. Public works in the Colony had to be abandoned, and almost imperative improvements postponed, and at last a loan had actually to be raised. "The financial arrangements," said Sir Cecil Smith to his Legislative Council on October 15, 1891, "have been completely upset; and although every endeavour has been made, and is being made, to reduce our expenditure, it has been found necessary, in order to meet our liabilities, to dispose of all our realisable assets—namely, the investments in gold amounting to 1,013,762 dols., and in Indian stock amounting to 350,000 dols." Even this state of things did not move the stony heart of the home authorities, and the people of Singapore made one more desperate set of appeals at the beginning of 1894, when the first series of payments came to an end. In response the Colonial Office removed £10,000 by way of solatium, and added £20,000 for additional barrack accommodation—thus meeting the appeals of the Colony by raising the total contribution for the present year from £100,000 to £110,000!

A little calculation shows the situation of the Straits Settlements to be as follows:—The revenue of the Colony for last year was 3,706,308 dols., an increase on 1892. Its expenditure was 3,915,482 dols., a decrease from 1892. Thus there was a deficit of 209,174 dols. The military contribution is therefore increased at a time when there is positively a financial deficit. To see, however, how bad the case really is, we must look at the effect of the depreciation of silver. The average Singapore

exchange at sight of the Mexican dollar for 1892 was 2s. 10⅝d. At the moment of writing it is 2s. 1¾d. To remit £100,000 to London in sterling during 1892 would therefore have cost the Colony (say) 700,000 dols.; to remit the same sum home to-day would cost 932,000 dols. That is, the military contribution of the Colony has risen between 1892 and 1894 by 232,000 dols., apart from any act of either the British Government or the Colonial authorities. Finally, the amount to be paid during the present year, at the present rate of exchange, is 1,025,200 dols.—rather more than twenty-seven and a half per cent. of the total revenue of the Colony! It is hardly surprising that such a state of things "tends to imperil good government."

Yet, as I have said, the question at issue seems one which should be settled without much difficulty on the time-honoured principle of give and take. Everybody admits, to begin with, that each part of the Empire ought to bear its proper share of the defence of the whole. Unfortunately, many parts escape doing so. Singapore, on the contrary, has always been eager to subscribe its proportion. Lord Knutsford will remember, I am sure, how in the famous confidential Colonial Conference of 1887 he held up Singapore as a shining example to the lagging Australian colonies. The Secretary of State bases his claim upon the "colossal trade" of Singapore. The Colony retorts that at least three-quarters of this trade merely passes through the harbour on its way to other parts of the Far East, and that therefore it is Imperial trade and not local. This is an indisputable fact. Lord Knutsford wrote: "The large stores of coal which your trade requires, of themselves invite attack." Singapore replies, first, that this coal belongs to ship-owners in London, and that therefore it is they who should be asked to pay for its defence; second, that it is used chiefly for the transit trade aforesaid; and third, that by common consent and the definite statement of a Royal Commission, Singapore is an Imperial coaling station second in importance only to the Cape itself. And I may here remind the Colonial Office that when

the Russian "scare" broke out in 1885, the home authorities instantly telegraphed to the Governor of Singapore asking how much coal was there. He replied, 200,000 tons; whereupon they fell into a panic lest the Russians should get it and our ships be deprived of it, and telegraphed in all directions for ships to go and guard it. And this was the origin of Imperial interest in the speedy and efficient arming of Singapore. The Colonial Office has made one very misleading statement in this controversy, namely, that the batteries of Singapore were armed with heavier guns at the special request of one of its own officials. But this official was, at the time of his recommendation, lent by the Colony to the Imperial Government, and was therefore an Imperial officer, acting in the interests of the Empire as a whole. Singapore is, of course, a link of the greatest value in the armed chain of Empire. Without it, or some similar place not far away, Great Britain could not pretend to hold her position in the Far East. On the other hand, the Colony has been hitherto a very flourishing one. In it, therefore, Imperial and local interests are pretty well divided. This is exactly what the Colony says. It has built forts (which were kept waiting a long time for their guns) at a cost of £81,000; it has paid £28,976 to recoup the Imperial Treasury for loss on exchange; for four years it has contributed £100,000 a year, though its allowance of troops has generally been below the strength promised; and now, though its revenue shows a deficit and its public works and imperative improvements are at a standstill, it offers to pay gladly one-half the cost of its defence, say £70,000 a year, notwithstanding the augmentation of this sum by the ceaseless fall of silver. If this is not a fair and indeed a thoroughly loyal offer, then facts and figures have no value, and the people of Singapore are right when they declare that the home Government exacts this contribution simply because the Colony is able to pay it, and for no other reason whatever. Before the British Government finally refuses the appeal of the Colony, let the authorities ask themselves what would be their

feelings if the inhabitants of the Straits Settlements absolutely refused to pay it, and requested that the forts which they themselves have built should be dismantled and the garrison withdrawn. This has already been suggested. When the despair in Singapore was at its height, I asked a highly-placed official at home if there were anything more the Colony could possibly do or say to avert their fate. "No," he replied, "the matter is settled—unless, perhaps, they were to do one thing." "What is that?" I asked eagerly. "Shoot the Governor," he said. The joke was heightened by the fact that there never was a more deservedly popular governor than Sir Cecil Smith. There are less desperate steps than this, however, in the power of any Colony, which would still be very disturbing to the Colonial Office; and while we are straining the loyalty of Hongkong in one direction by refusing it the measure of self-government which its neighbours possess, it is to be hoped that we shall not strain that of Singapore too much in another direction. Our pride in these *propugnacula imperii* should be too great to permit us to treat them unfairly.

CHAPTER III.

ANOMALIES OF EMPIRE: THE PROTECTED MALAY STATES.

IN point of size the Straits Settlements are dots on the map of the Malay Peninsula. One dot is Singapore; a little way up the coast Malacca is another; still following the coast the Dindings form a third; Penang and Province Wellesley are two more. Around and beyond these is a vast expanse of country of which Europe may be said to know virtually nothing. Yet the lower part of it is the scene of a successful experiment in government second in interest to none in the world, while of the upper part, Mr. Alfred Russel Wallace's statement made in 1869 that "to the ordinary Englishman this is perhaps the least known part of the globe" is still literally true.* Omitting the Straits Settlements the Malay Peninsula may be said to be divided into two parts by what has been aptly called "the Siamese *bunga mas* line," that is, to the north of the line lie the great Malay States whose independence is only impaired by their annual offering to the Siamese Government of the *bunga mas*—"Golden Flower"—in acknowledgment of nominal suzerainty. It is the latter which are still as unfamiliar as the remotest parts of Africa to the foreign explorer, and the journey I made through several of them, some parts of which covered ground visited by no white man before,

* An admirable little handbook, edited by Capt. Foster, R.E., and issued in 1891 by the Intelligence Division of the War Office, under the title "Précis of Information concerning the Straits Settlements and the Native States of the Malay Peninsula," should be better known than it is. Its information about the native States is very meagre, but Capt. Foster conscientiously collected all that was then accessible. Very few Europeans have travelled there.

will be found described in later chapters. It is the so-called Protected Malay States lying between these semi-independent, unknown regions and the flourishing British Colony discussed in the preceding chapter, that I propose to consider here.

If the traveller from Singapore should embark on a steamer and land at one of several ports along the coast without any previous knowledge of the existence of the Protected States, he would be greatly puzzled to explain his environment. He would arrive at a perfectly appointed foreign wharf; his landing would be supervised by a detachment of smart Sikh and Malay police; he would buy a ticket exactly as at a small country station at home, and be conveyed to the capital town by a line of admirably managed railway. There he would find himself in a place of tropical picturesqueness and European administration. Mangrove and bamboo-clump, coconut palm and sago-tree, would meet his eye on every side; Malay in *sarong* and *baju*, Kling in loincloth and turban, Chinaman in the unvarying dress of his race, and Englishman in helmet and white duck, would rub shoulders with him in the street; the long-horned, slow-stepping buffalo harnessed to a creaking waggon, and the neat pony-cart of his native land, would pass him in alternation; he would drive away along streets metalled and swept in foreign fashion and lined with buildings of Eastern material and Western shape. This, he would say, is not a British Colony, it is not a native kingdom: what is it? The answer would be, It is one of those political anomalies, a Protected State of the Malay Peninsula.

Of these there are five—Perak, Selángor, Sungei Ujong and Jelebu, Pahang, and the Negri Sembilan. Each was formerly a Malay State or congeries of States, and is now a British possession in all except the name. To each a British Resident is appointed, who is nominally the adviser to a Malay ruler, but practically administrator of the whole State, subordinate only to the Governor of the Straits Settlements and the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Each Protected State is theoretically ruled by a Council of State consisting of the Sultan, his

"adviser," the British Resident, several of the principal chiefs of the former, and the higher administrative officers of the latter. This meets perhaps half a dozen times a year to give final sanction to new laws and changes of local policy. Its meetings, however, are merely formal, since, although the Sultan might be consulted as a matter of courtesy upon a new law affecting natives, it is out of his power to place any effective opposition in the way of an ordinance drawn up by the Resident and approved by the two superior authorities I have mentioned. The Sultans receive a liberal allowance from the finances of the States for their personal expenses, and their principal officers either receive a proportionate allowance or a salary if they perform under the British Resident any of the duties of government. These five States have become protectorates in the familiar and inevitable method of Imperial expansion—in several cases at their own request. Perak received a Resident in 1874 in consequence of a prolonged series of hostilities between rival groups of Chinese tin-miners, in the course of which British interests and investments were jeopardised. The first Resident was Mr. J. W. W. Birch, who was treacherously murdered in the following year. The Perak War, which followed, will be remembered by many people. Three native officials who had planned the murder were hanged, and others, including Sultan Abdullah, were banished to the Seychelles. The protection of Selángor and Sungei Ujong dates also from 1874, and was equally due to internecine warfare. The large State of Pahang was for many years a thorn in the side of these two, owing to the disorderly condition of its inhabitants and the hostility of the Raja towards British subjects. This culminated in the unprovoked murder of a Chinaman, a British subject, in the streets of Pekan, the capital, in 1888. Whereupon the Colonial Government, at the limit of its patience, placed the State under British protection. The fifth, in order of time, the Negri Sembilan—two Malay words meaning simply "nine countries"—quarrelled among themselves to

the destruction of their prosperity and begged to be taken under British protection in 1889, which was done.

The change in the condition of each State as it was removed from native maladministration and placed under British control has been one of the most astounding spectacles in the history of the British Empire. Pahang, as I shall explain later, lags behind the rest, but the others have surpassed the condition of even the Protected States of India, and present most of the features of a British Colony in a population composed entirely of Malays and Chinese. They possess hospitals, both paying and for paupers, leper hospitals, lunatic asylums, and dispensaries; there is a State store, a State factory, and even State brick-fields; there are sanitary boards and savings banks, fire brigades and printing offices; waterworks, roads, and railways; post offices, telephones, and telegraphs; schools and police; and vaccination, which is compulsory, though there is no necessity for compulsion, is performed with "buffalo lymph," obtained from the Pasteur Institute in Saigon. Order is preserved by forces of Sikhs linked with an equal strength of Malays, and all the duties of administration are carried out under the Resident by a mere handful of Europeans, forming an uncovenanted civil service, directing a native staff. The revenues have risen by almost incredible leaps; two of the States have large credit balances. One hundred and forty miles of railway have been built by them, and their extraordinary prosperity shows no sign of diminution. As Sir Andrew Clark has said, "The result of our policy of adventure is one of which England may well be proud. A country of which in 1873 there was no map whatever, has been thrown open to the enterprise of the world. Ages of perpetual fighting and bloodshed have ended in complete tranquillity and contentment." All this has been accomplished by the administrative genius of literally a score of Englishmen.

To exhibit the condition of the Protected States at a glance and thus save much unnecessary description, I have compiled

the following table, which shows the area, population, revenue (with its increase), expenditure, volume of trade (with its increase), and the present credit or debit balance in the assets and liabilities of each State. With two exceptions marked below the figures are all taken from the Residents' reports for the year 1893.

	Area square miles.	Population (1891)	Revenue Dollars.	Increase over 1892.	Expenditure. Dollars.	Total Trade. Dollars.	Increase over 1892.	Assets and Liabilities. Dollars.
Perak	10,000	214,254	3,084,094	344,528	2,395,589	24,687,923	2,968,124	+ 444,534
Selángor	3,500	81,592	2,765,351	629,903	2,605,588	19,546,459	4,092,375	+1,090,289
Sungei Ujong and Jelebu ..	1,660	23,602	388,976	84,972	376,562	4,304,107	622,617	- 195,689
Pahang	10,000	57,462	88,688	33,644	278,392	(1892) 672,869	—	- 948,700
Negri Sembilan.	2,000	41,617	130,938	12,989	132,067	No returns.	—	- 257,354

From this table it will be seen that Perak * is at the head of the Protected States. Its area is much greater than any except Pahang, its population is nearly three times that of any other, and its revenue and volume of trade are much larger. Its credit balance has been reduced chiefly by heavy and at present unproductive expenditure in extending its railway system, of which sixty-eight miles are now open for traffic. Perak has been called the "child of Penang," but much more truly should it be called the child of the two enlightened men who have in turn directed its administration, first, Sir Hugh Low, and from 1884 to 1886, and from 1889 to the present time, Mr. F. A. Swettenham. The former of these set Perak on the right road, and to the foresight and administrative ability of the latter the present happy condition of the State is largely due. Mr. Swettenham has been connected with Perak since it

* The word *perak* (of which the last letter is not pronounced) in Malay means "silver." There is, however, no silver found in the State, and the word is supposed to refer to the silver-like masses of tin which are its principal product.

came under British influence. He was three times sent on special missions there in 1874. He took an active combatant part in the Perak War, and with Lieutenant Abbott and a handful of men defended the Residency, after the assassination of Mr. Birch in 1875, until it was relieved by British troops sent hastily from Singapore, for which service he was three times mentioned in despatches. At the conclusion of the war he was placed in charge of the Residency for a time in succession to Mr. Birch. He is one of the two or three best Malay scholars living, and his annual Reports are models of administrative ability. As an example of the progress of Perak the following passage from the report to the Resident by the magistrate of the district of Kinta is instructive:—"The advancement of this district is almost incredible. Ten years ago it was little more than a vast stretch of jungle, unapproachable except by a shallow and rapid river, and possessing not a single mile of first-class cart-road nor a village of any importance." During the year, 4,492 acres of mining land were taken up, and 822 acres of agricultural land; 15,847 acres of mining land and 2,958 acres of agricultural land were about to be assigned to applicants; 29,143 acres of land had been applied for, and fresh applications poured in every day. Mr. Swettenham has proposed a scheme for the irrigation of 50,000 acres of rice-growing land, and experts lent by the Indian Government reported favourably upon it. The First Battalion of the Perak Sikhs, which has a strength of 685 of all arms, has attained a high pitch of discipline and efficiency under Lieut.-Colonel Walker, and conducted itself with great credit on several occasions when it has had to take the field, especially in suppressing the recent revolt in Pahang.

In Selángor, substitute for the name of Mr. Swettenham that of Mr. W. E. Maxwell, at present Colonial Secretary in Singapore, and the history of the State might be told in the same words. It has a yearly trade of over twenty millions of dollars, and possesses in its treasury or on loan to

other States a balance of over a million. During the past year no fewer than 47,773 Chinese immigrants arrived within its borders. Its railway pays over 12½ per cent. interest, and would have paid more, as Mr. W. H. Treacher, the present Resident, explains, but for a deficiency of rolling stock, owing to the traffic having increased beyond expectation. Selángor has always been the rival of Perak in the race for the best show of prosperity, and it is difficult to say to which the palm belongs.

The allied States of Sungei Ujong and Jelebu are administered by an Officer-in-Charge, who reports to the Resident of Selángor. The total number of tin-mines in these two States is 150, covering 4,176 acres, and employing 4,000 Chinese miners, and Sungei Ujong contains the most flourishing example of coffee plantation in the Peninsula. This is the Linsum Estate, and its crop in 1893, upon 210 acres, some not in full bearing, was no less than 94,796 lbs. of clean coffee. The Negri Sembilan occupy the district between the last-named and Malacca, and have already attained a sufficient degree of prosperity to enable them to pay the interest upon their loan. In these States, as the Resident writes, "a population of 40,000 Malays is controlled by three Europeans and a few police," the remainder of the police being required for the Chinese coolies at work in the mines and on the estates.

The story of Pahang, the great State which extends from the borders of all the above to the eastern coast of the Peninsula, is unfortunately a very different one. When it was taken under British authority its population was reduced to almost the lowest level by Oriental rule. Mr. Rodger, the first Resident, described its condition prior to his arrival in 1888, in the following words:—"A system of taxation under which every necessary as well as every luxury of life was heavily taxed; law courts in which the procedure was the merest mockery of justice, the decisions depending solely on the relative wealth or influence of the litigant, and where the punishments were utterly barbarous; a system of debt-slavery under which not only the

debtor but his wife and their most remote descendants were condemned to hopeless bondage; an unlimited *corvée*, or forced labour for indefinite periods, and entirely without remuneration; the right of the Raja to compel all female children to pass through his harem — a right which has desolated almost every household in the neighbourhood of Pekan,—such are some of the more striking examples, although the list is by no means exhaustive, of administrative misrule in a State within less than twenty-four hours of Singapore, and immediately adjoining the two Protected States of Perak and Selángor. The condition of the Pahang *ryot* may be briefly expressed by stating that he had practically no rights, whether of person or property, not merely in his relations with the Raja, but even in those with his immediate District Chief."

The distances in the State are enormous, and no means of communication existed, while the most promising part was that situated a considerable distance from the sea-board, around the headwaters of a river rendered almost unnavigable by rapids. The Sultan, moreover, a man of violent and depraved character, conspired secretly against the authority of the Resident while openly professing to support him. Two revolts subsequently broke out, each of which had to be suppressed at great expense and by prolonged fighting, with the result of plunging the State heavily in debt to its neighbours and the Colonial Government. To add to its embarrassment, during the year before the arrival of the Resident, the Sultan had given away vast tracts of his territory in concessions to Europeans, who used them for speculative purposes, as thousands of investors in England have good reason to know. Enormous districts were thus shut out from native or Chinese development, while the European concessionnaires were endeavouring to dispose of them for preposterous sums. One of the first acts of the Resident was to give notice that all concessions thus granted, which had not been actively taken up by a certain date, would be cancelled, and accordingly twenty of these were annulled a short time ago.

Owing to the monsoon and the lack of harbour accommodation, the entrance to the rivers of Pahang is closed from the sea for nearly half a year, from about November, and the State is only accessible by a long and difficult overland route, when some small steamer cannot be found to take the considerable risk of attempting to cross the bar. During 1893 the pitiful sum of 21,205 dollars was spent on public works, and the whole trade of Pahang only amounted to 672,869 dollars. Of this the output of gold was 9,616 ounces, and of tin 265 tons. The only road in Pahang is an 8 ft. bridle-path 52 miles in length, which affords an instructive comparison with the 200 miles of good metalled roads and the 68 miles of railway of Perak. This State is, in fact, the "sick man" of the British possessions in the Malay Peninsula. It is heavily in debt, with no prospect of being able to discharge its liabilities, and all the money that it can raise is expended on administration, leaving little or nothing for the Public Works which alone would ensure its development. Its native inhabitants have suffered so much from their past, that even in so simple a matter as the procuring of a better species of rice seed and planting it, Mr. Hugh Clifford, the present Resident, says, "they are at once so ignorant and unenterprising that it would be futile to look to them to take the initiative in such a matter." Although the State has thousands of square miles of extremely fertile land, it imports all the rice used by the non-agricultural class. During the speculative period of 1889, houses were erected at Pekan, beyond any possible need. At the present moment many of them are deserted and are actually falling into ruin. The Sultan resides at Pekan, therefore this is the capital, although the true centre of the State ought to be moved, as Mr. Clifford shows, in the very able Report from which I have already quoted, to Kuala Lipis. In the interior are tribes of semi-wild natives, called Sakeis and Semangs, who are treated with the greatest barbarity by the Malays, and for whom British administration has done nothing. There is undoubtedly great mineral wealth in

Pahang, and the notorious Raub gold mines are at last actually paying interest upon their capital. Little can be done with this so long as the present system of administration continues. The native of Pahang is, of course, in a vastly happier state than he was seven or eight years ago, and the changes effected by British rule must be looked for almost entirely, as Mr. Clifford says, "not in a vastly improved system of communication, nor yet in a very marked advance in the material prosperity of the State, but rather in the great improvement noticeable in the condition of the bulk of the native population." The fertile and stanniferous lands of Pahang are no better than those open in Perak and Selángor, and it is therefore unreasonable to expect settlers for the former until all the latter are taken up. Year after year like the past two or three may go by without any improvement in Pahang, and therefore, to quote Mr. Clifford once more, "no one having the interests of Pahang at heart can pretend to regard the continued adoption of the present policy with any degree of satisfaction." The salvation of this great tract of the Peninsula must come, if at all, from a much wider scheme of reform.

The present Sultan of Perak, His Highness Raja Idris ibni almerhum Raja Iskander Shah, C.M.G., succeeded on April 5, 1889. He is the twenty-eighth of his dynasty in succession from Merhum Tanah Abang, who was buried by the Perak River four hundred years ago. "Before that time," says Mr. Swettenham, "Perak was known as Kastan Zorian, and the Malays of Perak had not then embraced the religion of Islam." His Highness is a man of attractive character and agreeable presence; and a conversation I had with him at Kuala Kangsa, where he resides, showed him to be a keen and appreciative observer of foreign ways. He visited England in 1882, and told me that what most struck him was the fact that in London there were "ten thousand times ten thousand carriages." The two things that had interested him most were the making of great guns at Woolwich, and the instrument-room at the General

Post Office. He was also much impressed by the urbanity of British royal personages in general, and of the Prince of Wales in particular. "In five minutes," he said of the latter, "I felt as if I had always known him. A Malay prince not worth five cents would make a thousand times more fuss." The Sultan has written a very lengthy account of his life, beginning with the genealogy of his own family, with the object of instructing other Malay Rajas; though, he adds, it will make them very angry, because it says, for example, that the lavatories of Western peoples are better than the palaces of the Malays. "The Malays," he continued, "are like the frog under the coconut-shell—they think there is nothing but what they can see. But Malaya is waking up—look at Perak and Selángor." His Highness remembered the guidance of Sir Robert Meade, of the Colonial Office, and desired that his respects might be presented to him. As an example of the friendliness existing between the protected and their protectors, I may quote Mr. Swettenham again, who wrote in his Report for 1890: "As regards my relations with His Highness, I do not think they could be more cordial than they are," and "His Highness's interest in the administration is as great and intelligent as ever, and his unvarying sympathy and good feeling are of the greatest assistance to me in my work." The extent to which bygones are bygones in the British protection of these States is sufficiently shown by the fact that two sons of the ex-Sultan Abdullah, who was banished for complicity in the murder of Mr. Birch, occupy posts in the Government service on the same terms as Europeans, and fill them faithfully and well. The Sultan himself has recently put on record his opinion that the Residential system has "vastly improved the material condition and prosperity of the Perak Malays of all classes." One fact may be adduced in support of this loyal admission. The Government of Perak now pays more than 180,000 dols. a year in allowances and pensions to Malays, whereas when the State was taken under British protection its total revenue did not reach 80,000 dols. yearly.

These figures should be interesting to the Aborigines' Protection Society. The truth is that the British Government is the best aborigines' protection society that has ever existed.

The State of Johor is neither a Colony nor a Protected State in the same sense as the preceding, but it must be mentioned here to complete the survey of this part of the Peninsula. Johor forms the point of the Peninsula, and contains about 9,000 square miles and 200,000 inhabitants, of whom the Chinese outnumber the Malays by four or five to one. The capital, Johor Bahru, is fifteen miles from the town of Singapore, and less than a mile from the island. Its ruler is His Highness Abu Bakar,* G.C.M.G., whose father was *Temenggong*, or Chief of Police, to the Sultan Ali, and was placed on the throne by the Indian Government, when the latter was deposed in 1855. He succeeded in 1885, and receives a considerable annual subsidy from the British Government, which controls the foreign relations of the State. He will probably be the last of his line, as Johor is understood, by the terms of his will, to pass to the British Crown on his decease. The Sultan is a familiar figure in certain circles in London, and he is well known to the inhabitants of Singapore as an exceedingly genial and hospitable potentate, who is always ready to entertain a distinguished visitor, or lend the use of his territory for a horse-raffle or other mild form of dissipation not sanctioned by the laws of the Colony. But his State offers a painful comparison with the other Malay States under British influence. It is undeveloped, without roads, without any modern system of administration ; it contains only two towns, the greater part of it is virgin jungle, and it differs from the ordinary Malay State only by the absence of actual misrule. The Sultan, however, has rendered great services to the Straits Government as go-between in many negotiations with other Malay rulers, although the latter do not regard him as an equal, on account of his far from royal birth.

Such, in its briefest form, is the remarkable history of those

* Hence "Mr. Baker, in Brighton.

political anomalies, the Protected Malay States, down to the present time. For the future, however, their history will have to proceed along other lines. The experiment has been an extremely successful one, but not much more success—possibly only retrogression—can be looked for in the same direction. The States have now outgrown the Residential system. While they had yet everything Western to learn, and their affairs were on a comparatively small scale, the personal rule of the Residents was the best education and control they could have, though even this would not have shown such good results if the Residents themselves had not happened to be men of unusual ability and courage. But now that the original Malay population is exceeded in numbers by the Chinese settlers, that the finances deal with millions of dollars, that to the protected areas have been added huge tracts of country which cannot possibly pay their way for a long time to come, and that inter-State co-operation is therefore absolutely necessary, I am convinced that the administration can no longer profitably be left in the hands of half a dozen men, necessarily often antagonistic to one another, none of whom possesses any higher nominal standing than that of servant to a native ruler. While the problems were small, the Residents were left almost unhampered in their decisions, and their rule therefore showed all the advantages of the "free hand." Now, however, they have at once both too much and too little authority. In details their control is virtually absolute, and it is they who must invent and propose every important policy. This will be, of course, of a piece with their action in small matters. At this point, however, they sink back into the position of merely subordinate officials. First, the Governor of the Straits Settlements investigates the matter with much less experience and knowledge than the Resident who has proposed it; and if he disapprove, there is an end at once. If he approve, the question goes before the Secretary of State for the Colonies, with still less ability to pronounce upon its merits—sometimes with not even enough local knowledge to enable him to pronounce correctly

the name of the place whose destinies are in his hands. The usual conclusion is that the Resident is either overruled, or his policy sanctioned with such conditions as deprive it of nearly all value. As against the Governor and the Secretary of State, the Resident is helpless, and all he can do is to wait two or three years for the opportunity of pointing out in his Report how much better it would have been if his original suggestions had been sanctioned. The Protected States, therefore, must be governed by a man whose position enables him to deal direct with the Secretary of State at home, and with much more authority than at present.

Another reason for a change is that the less flourishing States can only be set upon their feet with borrowed capital, and as the Colony has none to lend them, while two of their neighbours have substantial cash balances, it is easy to see where this must come from. But Perak and Selángor will be extremely unwilling to lend money to Pahang, unless they are able to bring their knowledge and experience to bear upon the spending of it, and under the present system they would have no more control than if they lent the money to Argentina. They might see their own savings being employed just across their borders in a manner which they knew to be futile, yet they could not stir a finger. In his Report for 1893, the Resident of Perak says: "As Perak has no direct interest in Pahang, and could profitably spend in Perak all the revenue likely to be raised here, financial help can only be given by making some sacrifice. There is no security for the advances made, beyond what can be hoped for from the future development of Pahang; and it is therefore only reasonable that, if the idea of advising the native rulers in the administration of the Malay States is to be maintained, those States which now find the means of financing Pahang should have a preponderating voice in the expenditure of their own money, and the schemes to which it is applied." But if the Residents of Perak and Selángor direct the spending of practically all the money spent

in Pahang, then it is they, and not the Resident of Pahang, who control the latter State; and why keep up the fiction of separate control? For this reason also, therefore, the time appears to me to have come for the substitution of one head for five.

But there is a further consideration in support of this view, which far outweighs in importance both those I have mentioned. It is this: the prosperity of the Protected States rests upon such an insecure basis that having risen as brilliantly and conspicuously as the rocket, it may come down as rapidly and irrevocably as the stick. It is based solely upon the products of the tin-mines. The Perak Report shows this clearly, though indirectly. The total value of exports for 1893 was 14,499,475 dols., and of this no less than 11,895,465 dols. was tin and tin-ore—82 per cent. The total revenue collected was 3,034,094 dols., of which Customs—"that is, duty on tin"—amounted to 1,342,741 dols.; and of course many of the other receipts are dependent upon the tin industry. The Selángor Report puts the truth more bluntly: "The revenue of the State hangs directly on the output of tin." Now all prosperity dependent upon mining is precarious, but that dependent upon alluvial tin-mines—and lode-mining hardly exists—must be the most precarious of all. It may be replied, however, that mining is a very good basis upon which to start; that California, for instance, owes its present agricultural wealth to the original attractions of its gold-fields. Undoubtedly, but the Malay States are not attracting a class of people who will develop into agriculturists. At present, when a tin-mine is exhausted, its neighbourhood becomes a desert. A paragraph in the Report for Sungei Ujong illustrates this: "The valuable tin-mines at Titi were in part worked out, and the mining town which sprang up there so rapidly has begun to dwindle." If the prosperity of these States is to continue, it is therefore clear that something else must be found and cultivated to take the place of mining when this becomes less profitable or ceases altogether. This something must, of course, be agriculture, and fortunately there

are no more fertile lands in the world than are here open to every comer on the best possible terms. I have given one example of coffee-growing, and it would be easy to multiply testimony. The manager of the Waterloo Estate in Perak writes: "The cultivation of coffee promises well, and where land is judiciously selected and opened, it cannot, in my opinion, fail to be a success." The Officer-in-Charge of Sungei Ujong reports: "Liberian coffee will grow on almost any kind of soil here. I have seen it growing on the 'spoil bank' of an old tin-mine, and at the present prices no form of agriculture could be more remunerative." And what is true of coffee is equally true of tea, pepper, gambier, tobacco, and rice. The States governments have done everything in their power to dispel the general ignorance of British settlers and planters about Malaya, and they offer the very warmest welcome to any who will come. Certainly no part of the Empire presents a better field for the agricultural investment of capital and personal efforts, yet what was said by the Resident of Perak in 1889 is still only too true: "Ten years ago, when almost nothing was known of the capabilities of the Malayan soil and climate, it seemed likely that the field just opened would attract many experienced European planters and a considerable amount of European capital. Now that the possibilities of agriculture have been to a large extent proved, communications greatly extended, and many facilities offered which did not then exist, the State seems to have lost its attractions for the planter."

To assure the future of the Protected States, therefore, it seems to me imperative that they should be formed into some kind of separate confederation—the Crown Colony of the Malay Peninsula, for example. This would remove them from the jurisdiction of Singapore, which now hampers and robs them; place them on a strong footing before the Secretary of State for the Colonies; enable their problems to be solved in a uniform manner, instead of by the conflict of interests; group their resources so that the stronger can afford the needed help to the

weaker in the wisest and fairest shape; develop and advertise their agricultural possibilities; protect their forests; codify their laws, and place the administration of them under a British judge; and finally, present a firm and permanent foundation upon which to build when the inevitable moment comes for the absorption of the rest of the Malay Peninsula.

FRANCE IN THE FAR EAST.

CHAPTER IV.

IN FRENCH INDO-CHINA: LEAVES FROM MY NOTEBOOKS.

IT is one of the curious and significant facts of the Far East that to get to a French possession there you must go in either an English or a German boat, with the single exception of the heavily subsidised Messageries Maritimes. I went to Tongking the first time in the little *Marie*, hailing from Apenrade, wherever that may be. As soon as we had crossed the restless Gulf of Tongking and were in sight of a low-lying green and evidently fertile country, wholly different from the rocky and forbidding coast of China, Captain Hundewadt hoisted the German flag, and the pilot came off. There are two bars, one hard, which must not be touched, and the other soft mud, upon which a ship can rush at full speed and either get over or stick, as the case may be. We stuck.

Within gunshot of us as we lay in the mud was a large white European house, built on the point of an elevated promontory. It is the summer house Paul Bert built for himself, just before death put an end to all his plans and ambitions for Tongking. It has never been occupied, and the Government was thinking of turning it into a sanitarium for the forces near the coast. Once over the bars we steamed a mile or two up the river, past half a dozen odd-looking river gunboats, and dropped anchor off Haiphong. The port of Tongking is now a pretty little town, with excellent broad streets, planted with trees on each side, with spacious warehouses and solid wharves, with one Boulevard of extensive shops, many pleasant bungalows, and an astonishing

hotel. At six o'clock its *café* holds a hundred people, taking their pre-prandial drink. To see them it is difficult to realise that you are at the other end of the earth from Paris, and there could not be a better illustration of the saying that a Frenchman takes France with him wherever he goes. The business part of the town consists of several crowded streets of Chinese houses, and the native town, which is miserable and very dirty, lies on the other side of a narrow creek. There are three excellent newspapers, one daily, one bi-weekly, and one weekly, and almost every characteristic of a French town, including the duel, which flourishes greatly in Tongking. Not a little money and much intelligent labour have been expended to transform the original malarious swamps into this bright and pleasing little place, reminding one of Algiers, with its broad green and white streets and constant sunshine. But I fear that both the labour and the money must be looked upon as little better than wasted.

There is nothing to detain one in Haiphong. An afternoon is enough to see it all. So next morning at eight I went on board a big, powerful, twin-screw steamer, *Le Tigre*, for the trip to Hanoi, the capital and largest town, upwards of a hundred miles up the Red River. The navigation is extremely difficult in places, owing to the mudbanks and sharp turns, but the twin-screw and the Chinese pilot between them managed every twist but one. There was no European captain, only a purser, and the Chinaman was apparently in sole command. A stack of Snider rifles stood in the saloon, and a plate of half-inch iron was suspended on each side of the pilot and the two men at the wheel, completely shielding them from bullets fired from the shore. We had a capital breakfast, and a charming French priest, in Chinese dress and pigtail, who was returning to his inland station in China *viâ* Tongking, told us string after string of adventures and incidents of his work among the Celestials. For hours the trip is monotonous. The banks are flat, the country is always green and fertile, the water-buffaloes wallow in the mud, and enormous flocks of teal rise in front every few minutes.

A Native Family at Home, Tongking.

A diversion came at one o'clock in the shape of a little post of soldiers halfway between the seaboard and the capital. The steamer came slowly alongside the high bank, a plank was thrown out, and the garrison invited us on shore. They were an officer, two non-commissioned officers, half-a-dozen privates, and about fifty native troops. The post was a strongly stockaded little place a hundred yards from the river, well able to keep off any ordinary attack. But the garrison was a sorry-looking band. The officers were in pyjamas, and the men's old thick blue and red French uniforms were only recognisable by their shape, nearly all the colour having long ago departed. Their coats were patched, their trousers torn and ragged, their boots split. As for their faces, anæmia of the most pronounced character was written plainly across them. I have never seen such a ragged and worn lot of soldiers. The arrival of the daily steamer is the only distraction of the little force, and they were profusely grateful for a bundle of illustrated papers. We also gave them a little more entertainment by running aground just opposite their post when we left.

The steamer reached Hanoi at midnight. The only hotel was closed; vigorous hammering at the door produced no effect whatever, and I was beginning to contemplate the prospect of spending the night in the street, when a jolly captain of artillery came past, evidently fresh from a good dinner, showed me a back way into the hotel, and even accompanied me, because, as he explained, I probably did not yet know how to treat the natives. Certainly if he did, I did not, although his method was simplicity itself. We discovered six "boys" sleeping sounder than I ever saw human beings sleep in my life, on a table in the dining-room. With one shove he pitched the whole lot in a heap on the floor, and as they even then showed unmistakable symptoms of an intention to finish their nap as they lay piled up on one another, he fell to work on the heap with his cane so vigorously that he soon had them scampering all over the room like a nest of disturbed rats. "Tas de cochons," he said, and resumed his homeward way.

Like almost every city of the Far East, so far as my experience goes, Hanoi is less interesting than you expect. The foreign town, of five or six hundred inhabitants, is little more than one street, named, of course, after Paul Bert, and even that is disfigured by a narrow, irregular tramway, running down the middle and carrying military stores all day long. There is a small lake in the centre of the city, with a curious islet and pagoda, that gives one pretty point of view, and the ride round the walls of the Citadel, a square mile or so of enclosed land, is interesting for once. And the "Pont de Papier," where the ill-fated Rivière met his fate so wretchedly on the afternoon of May 19, 1883, with the tiny pagoda just beyond it, where the brave Balny disappeared, are historically impressive if one has the whole story of these days in mind. But Hanoi makes a poor showing as the capital of Tongking. The Hotel Alexandre is the very worst I ever set foot in. The monuments are second to those of an ordinary Chinese town. The advent of the foreigner has killed native art and handicraft, without contributing anything to replace it. You may walk the length of the "Rue des Brodeurs" without finding a piece of embroidery worth carrying home. There is a "Rue des Incrusteurs," named after the workmen who inlay mother-of-pearl into ebony, but I spent half a day there before picking up a decent piece, and that was made before the French were thought of. The native metal-work, that sure test of the art-tendencies of an uncivilised people, has vanished with their independence. Even the Governor-General apologised for his surroundings. "I shall be able to receive you better," he said courteously, "when you come to Saigon." But there is this compensation for Hanoi as compared with Haiphong. The faster Tongking prospers, the faster will Haiphong decay; while Hanoi always has been the capital, and nature has so placed it that it always will be, and the two will prosper, if at all, together.

Of the native inhabitants, of whom Hanoi has 70,000, there is much that might be said. After China, with its hundreds of

thousands of great brown coolies, and its slim ones who will walk all day up-hill under burdens that would break down a European athlete on the level, the Annamites strike the visitor as a nation of pigmies. Their average height must be under five feet; they are narrow-chested and thin-legged, their mouths are always stained a slobbering filthy red with the areca-nut and lime they chew unceasingly, and they are stupid beyond the power of words to tell. Whether it is in any degree due to the fault of their conquerors or not, I cannot say, but they appear to be a people destitute of the sense of self-respect. At any rate, the French treat them as if they had none. The first time I went into *déjeûner* at the hotel at Haiphong one of the "boys" had left a dirty plate on the little table to which the host showed me. "Qu'est ce que tu fais, toi?" demanded the latter, pointing to the plate, and smack, a box on the ears followed that you could have heard fifty yards off. And this in the middle of a crowded dining-room. You would no more think of striking a Chinese servant like that than of pulling a policeman's nose in Piccadilly. Before a Frenchman, an Annamite too often appears to have no rights.

Both men and women in Tongking wear their hair long and twisted up into a kind of chignon on the top of the head. It is of course always lanky and jet-black. Their dress is of the most simple. The men wear a loose jacket and short trousers, and the women a long, straight shift reaching from neck to heels. The Annamite man is a very poor creature, and it is only among the upper classes that one sees occasionally a well-formed or handsome face, with some elevation or dignity of expression. The women are much better looking, and would often be pretty except for the stained mouth and teeth, which renders them horrible to a European eye. But in figure they are the most favoured of any I have seen in the Far East, as my illustration may go to show, and in the course of a walk in Hanoi you may meet a dozen who are straight enough and strong enough and shapely enough to serve as a sculptor's models. Their native

dance is a burlesque of the Japanese, to the accompaniment of a fiddle six feet long. The few women you see with clean mouths and white teeth are almost sure to be the mistresses of Europeans.

The most curious of the surface impressions of Tongking is the language you must learn to talk with the natives. Your ear becomes familiar with "pidgin English" before you have spent a day in the East, and, *pace* Mr. Leland, a horrid jargon it is, convenient, no doubt, but growing positively repulsive after a while. But "pidgin French," or "petit nègre," as it is called, comes as a complete surprise. And it is all the funnier because of the excellent native pronunciation of French. "Petit nègre" is characterised, as compared with French proper, by four features—omission of the auxiliary verbs, ignoring of gender, employment of the infinitive for all moods and tenses, and absence of words taken bodily from the native, like "maskee," "man-man," and "chop-chop," in Pidgin. The one expression which recurs again and again with an infinity of meanings is "y-a-moyen," or "y-a-pas moyen." And after this comes "fili," for "fini," nearly as often. The "You savvy" of Pidgin is "Toi connaitre?" The "My wantchee," is "Moi vouloir." The native servant is everywhere called by the English word "boy," pronounced "boi-ee," in two syllables. And the language is further enriched by a number of words recalling the nursery, like "pousse-pousse," for jinrikisha, "coupe-coupe," for a big knife, and so on. "Beaucoup" does duty for "très" and "bien," so one is constantly hearing sentences like these: "Moi beaucoup vouloir avoir sampan," "Soupe beaucoup mauvais—moi donner vous beaucoup bambou," and "Toi beaucoup imbécile." "Petit nègre" is of course much younger than Pidgin; for one person who speaks it a hundred thousand speak the latter; and it is not capable of the flights of oratory to which the accomplished speaker of Pidgin can soar. Nor will it ever become what Pidgin has long been—the *lingua franca* of communication between vast numbers of people otherwise

acquainted with only a score different dialects and tongues. I may add here that "Tongking" is the same word as "Tokyo," meaning "Eastern Capital," and that the former is the only correct spelling to express the Chinese sounds. "Tonquin" and "Tonkin" are indefensible, either in French or English.

The northern part of the peninsula of Indo-China is Tongking, the French territory adjoining China; the central part is Annam, which was formerly a long narrow strip of coast, but by the recent Convention with Siam stretches back to the Mekong; and the southern end of the peninsula is Cochin-China, with Cambodia lying behind it. Of all the possessions of France in the Far East, Cochin-China is the most imposing, as it is also the oldest. Saigon, the capital, was first captured by a combined French and Spanish expedition in 1859, and held by a small garrison until 1861, when Cochin-China was finally taken by France. For inhabitants it had in 1891, 1,753 French, 207 other Europeans, 6,600 Annamese, and 7,600 Chinese. It is connected by a steam tramway with the Chinese town of Cholon, three miles away, which has 40,000 inhabitants. The severe fighting which took place in and around Saigon practically destroyed the original native town, and the French were therefore able to rebuild it on their own lines. The result is that the Saigon of to-day is virtually a French town. It is laid out on the chess-board pattern familiar to all who have visited the western towns of the United States, and French taste has made it very attractive in appearance. The streets are lined with rows of trees, the roads are just like those of any European city, the public buildings are numerous and stately, the shops have all the external appearance of the *magasins* of Paris, the *cafés* are at every corner and are patronised with true French conviviality, and there is a very good reproduction of the Jardin d'Acclimation. The Palais du Gouvernement cost twelve million francs, and except perhaps the European-built "Audience Halls" of Bangkok, is the finest edifice in the Far East. The Cathedral is

almost equal to it, and every house is a little earthly paradise in its trim garden. But Saigon has many drawbacks to set against these advantages. The climate is simply appalling. Hundreds of people avoid the journey home from Shanghai or Hongkong by the comfortable Messageries Maritimes line, simply because they have once had experience of a night passed in the river off Saigon. I have seen a passenger fall on the deck, struck with heat-apoplexy under a thick double awning, and I have twice paced the deck for a whole night, fan in hand, sleep being out of the question because of the heat and the mosquitoes. And except for the Chinese, there is little commerce worth the name. It is a city of *fonctionnaires*, and nine out of ten Frenchmen are occupied in purveying either French luxuries or French personal services to the official and military classes. Take away the shop-keepers, the barbers, the tailors, the wine merchants, the tobacconists, and the restaurant keepers, and there would be virtually no Frenchmen left who was not a soldier, a sailor, or a Civil servant. Even many of the former have recently left the place. While I was at Bangkok the foreign community learned with pleasure that a French barber had arrived, and everybody went to him at once, thankful to escape from the doubtful comb and fingers of the native. He had left Saigon in despair, thinking that even in the Siamese capital he might do better. Like other French colonies, Saigon is the victim of protection and of the inability of the *colon* to shake off the depressing conviction of exile.

I paid a flying visit to another French colonial town, and it left an ineffaceable impression on my mind. I was on board a private ship sailing down the coast of Annam, when we ran short of medicine for one of our party who was down with fever. So we anchored off Tourane, and two of us went ashore in the ship's boat. It was in the middle of the afternoon on a week-day, but the main street of the town was almost deserted. Not a score natives were about, hardly a European was to be

seen, except a group of officers sitting in front of a *café*. It was half an hour before we could transact business at the post-office. The whole town was a spectacle of stagnation, though it is one of the Annamese ports described as "ouverts au commerce international." Tourane, in fact, was a vivid commentary upon the words of Pierre Loti about precisely this part of the Far East—"C'est le voile qui se tisse lentement sur les choses trop éloignées, c'est l'anéantissement par le soleil, par la monotonie, par l'ennui."

One very pleasant reminiscence of Cochin-China I have. The city of Saigon is situated 60 miles from the mouth of the river, where there is the well-known light of Cape St. James. There is a charming little hotel there, where the Saigonnais come to seek refreshment from the dreadful heat of the town. One of the most important stations of the Eastern Telegraph Company is at the Cape, for there the cable between Hongkong and Singapore touches land,* and connects with the French cable to Tongking and the land lines to Cambodia and Siam. It is a curious little colony at Cape St. James, a dozen Englishmen for the service of the English cable, three or four Frenchmen for the French cable, half-a-dozen pilots, and the few invalid Saigonnais who come to the hotel. The electricians get their supplies in a launch from Saigon every Sunday morning, and for the rest of the week their only communication with the great world is by the zig-zag line which trickles interminably out of the tiny siphon of Sir William Thompson's recorder. And this tells them little, for even news messages come in code. The great French mail steamers pass them twice a week, and the few

* At last a direct cable connecting Hongkong, Labuan, and Singapore has been arranged for and is now being laid. In the interests of the Empire this means of communication, independent of foreign soil, was absolutely essential. The next step, which ought not to be delayed a single day, should be to separate entirely from the British office in Hongkong the foreign employés of the Danish Great Northern Company. Their presence might conceivably constitute an Imperial danger of great magnitude. It should not be forgotten that the King of Denmark once took an attitude in this connection hostile to British interests.

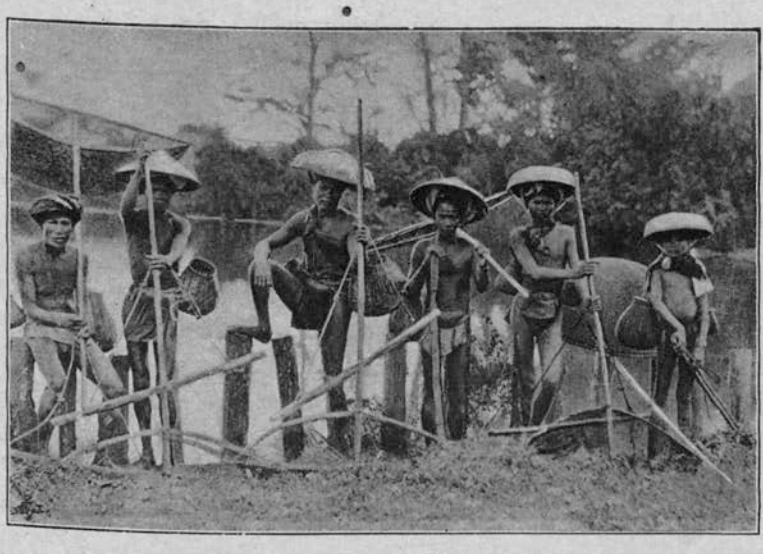
other steamers which ply to Saigon for rice pick up a pilot. The Company keep them well supplied with newspapers, and they have an excellent billiard-table, but their life is not a happy one. On Sundays, when the fresh supplies are in, they feast. On Monday they feast again, for all meat must be cooked at once. On Tuesday, cold meat. On Wednesday, hash. On Thursday, back to tinned meats, and by Friday there is probably neither bread nor ice at the Cape. Then, too, fever makes its regular round among them. Their pale faces, scarred with prickly heat and other physical nuisances of a damp tropical climate, are a painful reminder that our convenient telegrams, like everything else we enjoy, mean sacrifices on somebody's part. The staff of the Eastern Company are everywhere among the most intelligent and hospitable compatriots that the British traveller in the Far East can meet, and the station at Cape St. James became like a home for me for a few days. A good deal of romance is connected with this remote pulse of the great world. Not many years ago, for instance, the clerks used to work with loaded rifles beside them, and on one occasion the sleeping staff were aroused in the night by the report of a rifle, and on rushing out found that the night operator had been visited by a tiger while working at his instrument. The neighbourhood is still supposed, with more or less scepticism by those who live there, to be infested with tigers, and the government offers a standing reward of one hundred francs for the destruction of one. During the few days I spent at Cape St. James I made the acquaintance of an Annamite hunter, named Mitt. He was a grave and sedate man, extremely poor, and stone deaf, but his knowledge of the jungle and its inhabitants might have rivaled that of Mowgli himself. In the course of a long talk about *shikar* I consulted him on the possibility of getting a tiger, though I had already found that even in tiger lands tigers are not so common as one's imagination at home pictures them. And moreover, whenever there is a tiger there are a hundred men of his

locality bent on trapping him, or poisoning him, or snaring him with bird-lime, or, if needs must, on shooting him. My first hopes had been set on Vladivostok. There are the woolliest tigers in the world, and before reaching that remote spot I had been filled with stories of how they were in the habit of coming into the back yard for the scraps, and how men never walked abroad at night in parties of less than a dozen, all armed to the teeth. But once in Russian Tartary, I found the tiger was a tradition, and the leading merchant told me he had standing orders from three different high officials to buy any tiger-skin that came into the market, at almost any price. So I transferred my hopes to Korea. Was not the tiger a sort of national emblem of the Hermit Kingdom? And is there not a special caste of tiger-hunters, the very men who once gave such a thrashing to a foreign landing-party? In a ride across the country, therefore, I might well hope for a chance. From sea to sea, however, I never caught sight of even the hunter; only with much difficulty did I succeed in finding and buying one poor skin, and the most satisfactory response I could get to my earnest inquiries was the information, "There are two seasons in Korea: one in which the man hunts the tiger, the other in which the tiger hunts the man. It is now the latter; therefore you must come at another time." So in Northern China, so, too, in Tongking, though there I once actually saw a tiger's footprint at the entrance to a coal-mine. Mitt was disposed to be encouraging, and at last he declared, "Moi aller voir." So he disappeared for a couple of days, and returned one morning with instructions for me to be ready in the afternoon, and we started at five o'clock, Mitt walking and running ahead and I following him on a pony.

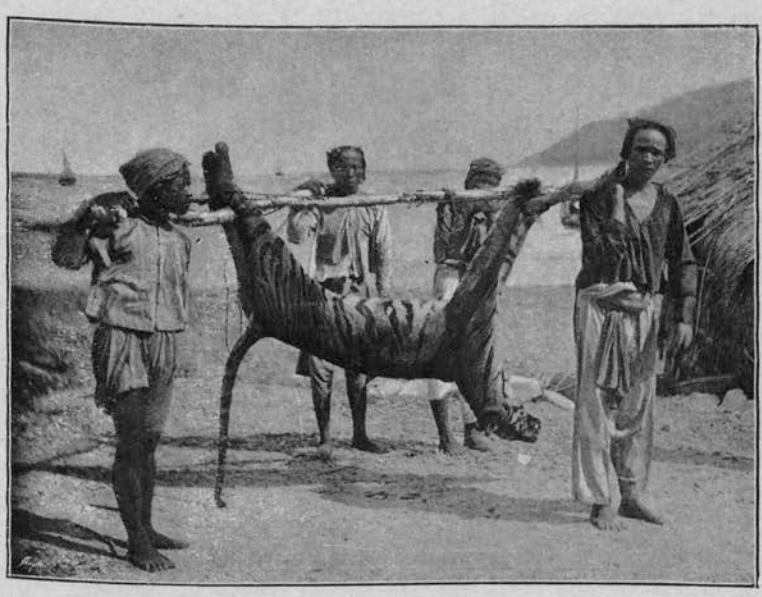
For a time we followed a road through the woods and then struck off into the bush. An hour later Mitt motioned me to dismount. A coolie waiting for us jumped into the saddle and galloped off. We were on a small rising ground, dotted with bushes, in the middle of a rough tangle of forest and brush-

wood. I looked everywhere for the *mirador*, and not finding it, I yelled an inquiry into Mitt's ear. He pointed to a tree fifty yards away and I saw how marvellously he had concealed it. He had chosen two slim trees growing four feet apart, behind these he had planted two bamboos at the other corners of the square, and then he had led two or three thickly-leaved creepers from the ground and wound them in and around and over a little platform and roof, till he had made a perfect nest of live foliage. The floor was about twenty feet from the ground, and it looked perilously fragile to hold two men. But it was a masterpiece of hunting craft. In response to a peculiar cry from Mitt, two natives appeared with a little black pig slung on a pole, yelling lustily. The *mirador* overlooked a slight depression in which an oblong pond had been constructed for the buffaloes to wallow in, as these creatures cannot work unless they are allowed to soak themselves in water two or three times a day. By the side of this the pig was securely fastened. The two natives took themselves off with their pole, Mitt gave me a "leg up" into the *mirador*, which shook and swayed as we climbed gingerly in, and we arranged ourselves for our long watch. We loaded our rifles at half-past six, and till half-past ten we sat side by side like two stone Buddhas. Then five wild pigs came trotting down to the water to drink, which was an intensely welcome break in the monotony. At half-past eleven Mitt made signs to me to go to sleep for a while and he would watch. At half-past twelve he woke me and immediately fell back in his turn, fast asleep. It had been moonlight, but the moon was now hidden behind clouds. On the horizon broad flashes of summer lightning were playing. There was a chorus of frogs in the distance, night-birds were calling to one another, the great lizards were making extraordinary and grotesque noises, and it was so dark that I could no longer discern the black patch of the pig's body on the ground twenty yards away.

This is not a book of sporting adventures, though there are many such memories upon which I should like to dwell, so



A Group of Natives, Tongking.



How I Earned a Hundred Francs.

I will only say that at two o'clock, suddenly, in perfect silence and without the slightest warning, a big black object flashed by the far side of the little pool. It was like the swoop past of an owl in the starlight, like the shadow of a passing bird, utterly noiseless and instantaneous. I fired, and a minute afterwards a loud cough showed that the bullet had found its place. At daylight we descended and sought everywhere on the hard ground for footprints. The search brought us for a minute to the edge of a stretch of tall grass. That moment came very near being the last for one of us. While we were peering about, the tiger suddenly sat up in the grass not ten feet away, and, with a tremendous roar, sprang clean out into the open. He was so near that it was out of the question to shoot. If I had flung my rifle forward it would have fallen on him. I could see his white teeth distinctly and the red gap of his throat. I remember even at that moment wondering how he could possibly open his mouth so wide. Mitt and I were perhaps eight yards apart and the tiger leaped out midway between us. Instinctively the Annamite made a wild rush away on his side and I on mine. The tiger had evidently walked just far enough into the grass to be hidden and had then lain down. His presence there took us so completely by surprise that we were helpless. If he had been slightly less wounded than he was, it is perfectly certain that in another instant he would have sprung upon one or the other of us, as we had not the remotest chance of escaping by running away. But the first spring was evidently all it could manage, for it turned immediately and sneaked back into cover. It was evident that the beast was no longer in fighting trim, so after a few minutes we followed it into the grass and I despatched it with a couple of shots. Every sportsman knows that at such a moment one is ridiculously happy. It turned out to be a tigress, a little under eight feet long, and very beautifully marked. Six coolies carried her on crossed poles; the natives came out and "chin-chinned" her to Cape St. James, for the tiger is "joss" to them; her skin went to Rowland Ward's; her

claws were mounted as a necklace by a Chinese goldsmith; her body was eaten by the Annamites, and I had a reward of a hundred francs from the French Government for killing an *animal nuisible*. With that reward and a little addition Mitt was able to settle down for life as a landed proprietor. Since then I have found out a place where a dozen tigers may certainly be shot in a week or two, but this is for another time.

The French war with China—or the "reprisals," as it was called by France—has left many a memory in the Far East. Some of these are instructive for the future, some of them should be put on record for the historian, while some are too dreadful to tell at all. Among the first-named are the advantages attaching to the state of "reprisals." During the war the bullocks for victualling the French forces used to stand in the streets of Hongkong. The Hongkong coolies at first refused to work for the French, and the French mail steamers were loaded by "destitutes" from the Sailors' Home. Hongkong was on the eve of a general strike of the Chinese. The coolies refused under threats from China, but when they saw that the French could get on without them, and that the coolies who replaced them were getting a dollar a day, they returned to work. The French fleet established coaling-stations in the Pescadores, and at the anchorage of Matsu, a few miles north of the mouth of the river Min, and at these points they were regularly supplied with coal from a non-British firm in Hongkong. The same firm were dealing at the same time with the Chinese government. One curious incident of the war was narrated to me by the chief actor in it. There was an American-built craft of five hundred tons, named the *Ping-on*, sailing under the British flag. She was sold by her owners to the Chinese government to be delivered in Foochow, and sailed for that port with nine hundred Chinese soldiers on board. They mutinied and refused to be taken to Foochow, and forced the captain to take them to Taiwan, in Formosa, which he did, receiving there the first

payment of seventeen thousand dollars. There the Chinese put another captain on board, and in some unexplained way, succeeded in getting her to sea still under the British flag. For some time she ran between Amoy and Formosa, until one day, with a full load of Chinese soldiers, she ran into the midst of the French fleet in Rover's Channel, in the Pescadores. This was a very curious "accident" for an experienced navigator to make. As soon as the Chinese saw their position a number of them jumped overboard, and the *Ping-on* was captured and taken to Saigon. That there was something very wrong about her right to fly the red ensign is proved by the fact that the British Government took no steps whatever on her behalf, as they did, for instance, in the case of the *Waverley*, which was captured by the French and given up again. The blockade of Formosa gave rise to many strange and painful incidents. Before Keelung was taken, one of my informants had seen thirty-two heads of French soldiers in the market-place, all having either deserted or been captured at the unsuccessful attack on Tamsui, where French troops in heavy marching order were landed with three miles of paddy-fields between them and the enemy, whereas a mile above the fort they might have found an excellent landing-place. Being over their knees in mud they were of course simply mown down by the Chinese riflemen. For every one of these heads a reward of a hundred taels had been paid. The foreigners in Formosa protested so strenuously against this barbarity of the Chinese that the reward was altered to a hundred taels for a live Frenchman, and I have talked to the man who had thirty under his charge at one time. They were then treated very well, most of them being ultimately given a free passage to Amoy, and a few entering the Chinese service, where some remain to this day. These thirty had all deserted from the French ships, and all but two or three were men from Elsass-Lothringen and spoke little but German. "You may guess," added my informant, who was a foreigner occupying a high official position, "how miserable they must

have been on board, for them to desert to a place like Formosa!" As an example of the way the Chinese were swindled by certain foreign purveyors, I may mention that they were supplied from Europe with five hundred thousand rounds for Winchester rifles, and that the whole of this ammunition was found to be worthless, when a foreign officer examined it, and was destroyed. Another dreadful incident of which I find all the details in my notebooks, arose from the necessity the French found or believed themselves to be in to shoot a number of women in Keelung. An alarming number of French soldiers were being reported as missing, and it was alleged that these women had decoyed them into houses and there made away with them in horrible ways. Twenty women were identified and found guilty, and they were all shot. In judging of any acts of punishment or retaliation by Europeans against Chinese, it must never be forgotten that acts of appalling and almost incredible barbarity are the common accompaniment of all Chinese warfare. If it were not that the details are indescribable I could give a blood-curdling list of horrors that have been described to me. And as I have more than once had a narrow escape myself at the hands of Chinese ruffians, I speak not altogether without personal experience.

There is one other event of the Franco-Chinese "reprisals" upon which public opinion, particularly in France, is ill-informed, and which, in the interests of history, should be recognised in its true light. I mean the engagement between the French and Chinese fleets at the Pagoda Anchorage in the Min river, off Foochow, on August 23, 1884. This is generally regarded as a battle, and as Admiral Courbet's greatest achievement: in fact, it was a massacre. M. Pierre Loti calls it "la grande gloire de Fou-tchéou," and all French writers follow in the same strain. For weeks the Chinese fleet had lain at anchor, covered by the shotted guns of the French fleet, and considering the utter and instant cowardice shown by the Chinese when the critical moment at last came, it can only be supposed that they were under the impression that the French would not really attack

after all. The Chinese ships numbered eleven,* all of wood, mounting forty-five guns, only a few of which were of large calibre, and carrying 1,190 men. The French ships were nine armoured vessels and two torpedo boats, with seventy-seven guns and 1,830 men. The signal for the engagement was given immediately on the arrival of the *Triomphante*, by the hoisting of the red flag on the *Volta* at fifty-six minutes past one o'clock. At three minutes past two all was over. Two Chinese vessels sank in a few seconds. Two others ran ashore in attempting to escape. Two more were so moored that their big guns could not be fired, and they were immediately adrift in a sinking condition. Three more were disabled at the first discharge. One, the *Yangwu*, fired her stern chaser once, killing several men on the bridge of the *Volta* and almost killing Admiral Courbet himself. Before she could reload, a torpedo-boat from the *Volta* reached her and she was blown to pieces *within twenty-seven seconds* of the beginning of the fight. One Chinese vessel alone may be said to have been fought. This was the little *Chenwei*. "Exposed to the broadsides of the *Villars* and the *d'Estaing*, and riddled by a terrific discharge from the heavy guns of the *Triomphante* as she passed, she fought to the last. In flames fore and aft, drifting helplessly down the stream and sinking, she plied her guns again and again, till one of the French torpedo boats, dashing in through the smoke, completed the work of destruction."* "The captain reserved one loaded gun till the last moment, and then as the battered and shot-rent ship gave the last mournful roll, he pulled the lock-string and sent hissing on its errand of hate the last farewell of the unfortunate *Ching Wai*."† "Though in *seven minutes* from the firing of the first shot every Chinese vessel was practically disabled, the French continued to pour in shot, shell and Hotchkiss fire,

* Imperial Chinese Maritime Customs, Report of Mr. Deputy Commissioner Carrall, which may be regarded as an official account of the engagement.

† "The French at Foochow," by James F. Roche and L. L. Cowen, U.S. Navy, which confirms the above in all essential details.

regardless of the wounded and helpless men in the crippled ships. . . . The casualties on the French side were 5 killed and 15 wounded, and on the Chinese side 419 killed and 128 wounded, and 51 missing, besides 102 killed and 22 wounded on board war junks." Such is the true story of the Foochow fight. Of course war is war, and the French Marshal was right when he said, "Quand je fais la guerre je laisse ma philanthropie dans les armoires de ma femme." And it is the business of a fleet to disable the fleet of the enemy in the shortest possible time. But with the exception of the *Chenwei* on one side and the ten men on the torpedo-boat of the *Volta* on the other, the less said about "gloire" on this occasion the better. French soldiers did cover themselves with glory when their commander made his fatal blunder before Tamsui, and many a time in Tongking, but Foochow belongs to another category.

I have in my notebooks the following striking story of the death of Rivière, which I took down in these words from the lips of the narrator, who sufficiently describes himself. It will be remembered that Commandant Rivière, an extremely gallant but very nervous man, ambitious of literary honours, who had said, "Je m'en vais par le Tonkin à l'Académie," had been compelled to spend nearly a year in possession of the citadel of Hanoi, while the Chinese Black Flags came in thousands into the town and gathered in impudent strength in the neighbourhood. At last the reinforcements he had prayed for came, and slight hostilities began at once. Then the Black Flag leader, the famous Liu Jung-fu, issued his challenge to the French commander. "You send out teachers of religion," it said, "to undermine and ruin the people. You say you wish for international commerce, but you merely wish to swallow up the country. There are no bounds to your cruelty, and there is no name for your wickedness. You trust in your strength and you debauch our women and our youth. . . . He who issues this proclamation has received behest to avenge these wrongs. . . . But Hanoi is an ancient and honourable town. It is filled with

honest and loyal citizens. Therefore could he not endure that the city should be reduced to ruins, and young and old put to the sword. Therefore do I, Liu Jung-fu, issue proclamation. Know, ye French robbers, that I come to meet you. Rely on your strength and rapine, and lead forth your herd of sheep and curs to meet my army of heroes, and see who will be master. Wai-tak-fu, an open space, I have fixed on as the field where I shall establish my fame." * This was stuck up one night upon the gates of the citadel and all over the stockades, and was followed by an attack next day. So much by way of introduction: now for the story which was told to me. My informant said: "Rivière was at Hanoi doing nothing, in spite of the fact that the Chinese were known to be gathering round the place. People talked a good deal about it, and one day the challenge came from Liu Jung-fu. So Rivière said, 'That's nothing but humbug—I'll show you.' And next morning he went out with four hundred men, himself in a carriage and pair, for he had been suffering from fever. It was to be just a morning's walk—nothing else. Berthe de Villers was with him, and when they reached the Pont de Papier he came up and said, 'Vous feriez bien, Commandant, de faire fouiller ces bois.' 'Vous avez peur?' asked Rivière. 'Je n'ai jamais peur,' replied Villers, and turned to walk off, when a volley was fired from the wood. Villers was hit in the stomach, and a quarter-master, standing close by, in the chest. Rivière sprang out, placed Villers and the man in the carriage and ordered it back to Hanoi at once. The horses were turned, bolted, and carried the two men at full gallop back to Hanoi, where they arrived locked in each other's arms in the death-grasp. In the meantime the volleys had continued and men had fallen by dozens and lay in heaps along the road. Rivière rushed ahead to get a gun on the bridge turned round so that it could be brought back, when he was struck mortally in the side and fell. A lieutenant named

* For the whole proclamation see J. G. Scott, "France and Tongking," 1885, p. 32, and C. B. Norman, "Tonkin," 1884, p. 210.

Jacquis ran up, and Rivière, seeing that he had made a horrible and fatal mistake, and that he was mortally wounded, ordered Jacquis to kill him. 'Jacquis, brûle-moi la gueule!' 'Je ne veux pas, Commandant.' 'Je vous le commande!' 'Je ne peux pas, Commandant.' Then Rivière drew his revolver and blew his brains out, and Jacquis, seeing it, did the same. Rivière's head was carried away after the *sauve qui peut*, and was only recovered a long time afterwards after much negociation. It had been put in spirits of wine in a kerosine oil tin, and was perfectly recognisable, whiskers and all. I slept on that tin for several nights. Then I was a member of the committee who drew up the *procès verbal* uniting the head to the body. He had shot himself in the mouth and the bullet had come out behind the left ear." With regard to this story I can only say that I repeat it exactly as it was told to me in Tongking by a thoroughly respectable informant. Of course Rivière's sortie, the rout of the French, the return of the defeated troops into Hanoi, the distribution of wine, the consequent drunkenness of the over-strained men, the officers themselves doing sentry-go on that "black night" of May 19, 1883, the seizure of Rivière's head and the subsequent surrender of it, are matters of history. With this strange story I close my notebooks so far as souvenirs of the war are concerned.

One of the most remarkable romances of modern Eastern history is connected with these French colonies. In the spring of 1889 there appeared at Hongkong a tall, well-built Frenchman, with a bushy brown beard and very long legs, who called himself Marie David de Mayréna, and distributed visiting-cards with the words "S.M. le Roi des Sédangs" printed upon them. He had had an adventurous career in the Far East, in the course of which he had more than once displayed great personal courage in guerilla warfare. At last his wanderings brought him to the region of the Sedangs, a tribe inhabiting part of the *Hinterland* of Annam, a region not so well known then as it has since become. By these people he had been elected king, and of the

genuineness of his election there can be no doubt whatever. He was at first recognised by the French missionaries and by the French authorities, and I have myself seen correspondence and treaties which establish his claim beyond question. Of these treaties there were a score signed between Mayréna and the chiefs of the different tribes; with the Hallongs and Braos, signed by Khen on June 3, 1888; with the confederation Banhar-Reungao, signed by Krui, President; with the Jiarais, signed by Ham on August 19, 1888, promising tribute of "un éléphant domestique dressé"; with the village of Dak-Drey and half-a-dozen others, signed by Blâk, chief, translated and witnessed by P. Trigoyen and J. B. Guerlach, "missionnaires apostoliques"; and finally, a treaty of alliance between "les R. P. Missionnaires et les Sédangs," concluded "entre Marie, roi des Sédangs, et le R. P. Viallèton, supérieur de la Mission des Sauvages Banhar-Reungao." This treaty provided that "à partir d'aujourd'hui, toutes les tribus ou villages qui ont reconnu ou qui reconnaîtront a l'avenir l'autorité du Roi des Sédangs seront les amis et alliés des villages des Pères Missionnaires. En cas d'attaque des Missions, ils prêteront aide et secours." I should add that I give these details not only for their romantic interest, but also because when Mayréna was thrown over by the French authorities and the missionaries, he was poohpoohed as a common liar, and now that he is dead and the whole strange adventure at an end, I take a pleasure in showing that he was not wholly an impostor, in spite of his vanity and his follies. It should be added in explanation of certain phrases that his French was by no means always above reproach. To continue, the relations which had subsisted between Mayréna and the priests are clearly shown by the following passage in the treaty, which, like most of this strange history, is now published for the first time so far as my knowledge goes: "Considérant que si nous detenons la couronne du Royaume Sédang, nous la devons aux RR. Pères Missionnaires de la Société des Missions

Etrangères de Paris ; que c'est grâce à leurs concours que nous avons pu expliquer notre volonté et parcourir le Royaume avant d'être élu ; que ce sont eux qui ont servi d'intermédiaires entre nous et les chefs pour traduire nos pensées"—complete liberty to preach is granted, all religions are promised toleration, but that of the Roman Catholic Church is declared the official one; the right of refuge is given, too, in chapels, and finally lands for a new town to be *chef-lieu* of the province of Kon Trang, and to bear that name, are conceded to the R. Père Trigoyen. This treaty is dated Kon Jéri, August 25, 1888. The "Constitution" is dated July 1, 1888, and its Article III. reads, "M. de Mayréna, déja élu Roi des Sédangs, portera le titre Roi Chef Suprême," and Article V., "Le drapeau national sera bleu uni avec une croix blanche à l'étoile rouge au centre." It was signed by thirty-seven chiefs, of whose names I copied only the first and the last—Kon Tao Jop and Pelei Tebau. When Mayréna first turned up in Hongkong, he was vouched for by the French Consul and introduced by him to everybody, including the Governor, in consequence of which his social position was sealed by an invitation to dinner at Government House. At this time he was an astounding figure, when in his royal attire. He wore a short scarlet jacket with enormous *galons* on the cuffs, a broad blue ribbon, a magenta sash in which was stuck a long curved sword worn across the front of the body, white trousers with a broad gold stripe, and a white helmet with a gold crown and three stars. He distributed broadcast the "Order of Marie I.," beginning with the captain of the little Danish steamer *Freyr*, in return for the hoisting of his royal standard in Haiphong harbour, and continuing with the Governor of Hongkong, who was caused no slight embarrassment in getting rid of the impossible ribbon and cross. He used notepaper with a huge gold crown and coat-of-arms upon it, gave large orders for jewellery, and conducted himself generally like a crowned head. I have seen a private letter he wrote at this time, from which the following passage is perhaps

worth putting on record: "Il est un fait bien certain, c'est que entre l'Annam et le Siam il existe un vaste pays qui a nom Laos. . . . Or, les Sédangs et les Hamongs sont (illegible), je parle des chefs marqués au bras et dans le dos par le roi du Laos. La France a-t-elle quelque droit sur le Laos? Non! . . . Le Laos . . . n'a aucune rélation avec les nations Européennes." Mayréna succeeded in getting a few Hongkong merchants to enter into an arrangement with him, by which he conceded to them the right of developing the country of the Sedangs, in return for certain duties upon trade and exports. But the collapse came, of course, when the French authorities changed their policy and took a line of direct opposition to him. Even the missionaries who had enabled him to secure the treaties of which they themselves were the official witnesses, denounced him as an impostor. He then offered himself and his country to the British, who would naturally have nothing to do with him, so he next tried the Germans, and was actually indiscreet enough as to send a telegram to Berlin in open German, offering his allegiance, forgetting that this must pass through a French office in Saigon. Of course it was read and reported from there and orders were issued for his arrest. He believed that he was condemned to be shot for high treason, so he went to Europe by the German mail steamer, a few of his acquaintances in Hongkong passing the hat round to pay his passage. After he had left, the police succeeded in recovering most of the jewellery he had presented and failed to pay for. A man of this stamp, however, is never very long without money, and after spending some time in prison in Ostend for debt he next turned up in Paris and lived there in luxury for awhile, the French press not being quite sure what to make of him. Finally, he returned to the Far East, settled down with one male companion and two or three female ones on an uninhabited island off the coast of the Malay Peninsula, where a cobra brought his strange career to a sudden end by biting him in the foot. All that remains of "Marie I., King of the Sedangs," is

the set of postage stamps he issued, which are among the most prized curiosities of the philatelists. Such is the true story of a "man who would be king," and it is perhaps worth telling as an illustration of the fact that even in these late days there may be as much romance in reality as in fiction, at least in the wonderland of the Far East.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE FRANCO-CHINESE FRONTIER.

I WAS particularly fortunate in having the opportunity of making a flying trip to the frontier between China and the French possessions. This is far off the beaten track; no vessels go there except to carry military supplies, and no private boat-owners could be induced to go for fear of the pirates. I had been to see the coal mines of the "Compagnie française des Charbonnages du Tonkin," and the Managing Director, M. Bavier-Chauffour, was good enough to place his steam yacht, the *Fanny*, at my disposal. The trip was one of great interest, and at the time of my visit no Englishman had been there, except Mr. James Hart, who represented China on the Commission to delimit the frontier.

From Hatou, where the coal mines are, we steamed due north along the coast, entering almost at once the unique scenery of Along Bay. For hours here we threaded our way among rocks as thick as trees in an orchard—enormous towering hills a thousand feet high, great boulders hanging over sea-worn caves, tall trembling steeples, tiny wooded rock-islets, shimmering grottos, and an infinite number of grotesque water-carved forms —the monk, the inkstand, the cap of liberty. All the afternoon there was one of these within gun-shot on each side. This is the pirates' haunt, and it is indeed a glorious thing to be a pirate king when you can run from your pursuer into Along Bay and disappear instantly at any point. On our way down we came across a fleet of sampans, carrying a thousand wood-

cutters to their work, convoyed by a gunboat. The commander hailed us, and we went on board. "I engage you to be cautious," he said; "there is a well-armed band of pirates reported on the coast. I would come a little way with you, but I have just received telegraphic orders to stand by these boats. However, keep a good look-out."

By the evening of the second day we were close to our destination—the mouth of the river separating Tongking and China. It was very foggy intermittently, and the pilot was about at the end of his knowledge. He believed us, however, to be just off the mouth of the river. So we held a council of war on the bridge, and decided to anchor. The word was hardly out of our host's mouth when—scrunch, scrunch, under the keel told us it was too late. Full speed astern, anchors laid out, everybody on board run backwards and forwards across the vessel—none of these things moved us. We were high and dry, on a falling tide. Then the fog lifted for a moment, and we saw where we were—far beyond the mouth of the river, within a quarter of a mile of the mainland of China, and in probably the very worst spot for the very worst pirates in the whole world. And in these seas there is only one tide in the twenty-four hours. For twenty hours we should be on the sandbank, in two or three hours we should walk round the launch; never in their lives would the pirates have had a chance at such a prize as the *Fanny;* and they could come in any number from the mainland. We tried to laugh at our bad luck, but the situation was decidedly unpleasant. One of our party knew the country very well, and the natives, as he speaks Annamese, but we all knew enough to know one thing—namely, that it would never do to be taken alive. To blow one's brains out if necessary is one thing; to be skinned alive is another. So we made preparations for our defence. No craft travels in these waters without being armed; and we were particularly well off. We had each his gun, rifle, and revolver; three Sikh guards from the mines had their rifles, and there were six Winchesters in the rack in

FRANCE AND CHINA: WATCHING THE FRONTIER.

the saloon. The Chinese captain and crew could all be depended upon; so we posted a sentry forward, one aft, and one on the bridge, to be relieved every two hours, with orders first to hail and then to fire at anybody or any boat that might approach. Then, after dinner, we laid our revolvers on the table and commenced an all-night game—the second time in my life that I have assisted at the unholy union of poker and pistols. Once only were we disturbed. About two o'clock the Sikh in the bows shouted "Sampan!" In an instant we were on deck, and there, sure enough, was a big black boat approaching from the sea. We waited till it was within a couple of hundred yards—long enough to see that it was full of men, and was being rowed in unusual silence; then our Annamite-speaking member shouted, "If you don't show a light instantly we shall shoot." There was no answer, and still the boat came on. He shouted again, and the rifles were at our shoulders, when the boat showed a lantern. Then slowly it disappeared back into the darkness.

So ended our desperate affair with the pirates. Their existence is no joke, however. Numbers of native junks fall into their hands, and a few months before I was there several Europeans had been murdered by them, and two or three others with sums of money in their possession, had completely disappeared. A fortnight previous two redoubtable pirate chiefs were captured, two hundred men with 120 breechloaders, after an expedition costing seven thousand dollars and a hundred killed and wounded. At a place called Caobang they are still formidable in the field, kept by their leaders under strict discipline and training, and, when hard pressed, make their escape across the frontier into China, where the mandarins help them. And, of course, every junk that leaves the Canton river is heavily armed with brass cannon, and every European steamer that plies on it has an open stack of loaded rifles in the saloon for the passengers' use.

It is a long row up the river to the little frontier town of

Monkay. This is—or rather was—a very peculiar place. It was built half on each side of the little stream that forms the actual frontier. Two halves had different names, the Tongking one only being called Monkay, and the Chinese town Trong-King. (The reason for using the past tense will be plain presently.) The town had no poor quarter; its streets were mathematically laid out; its houses were all of brick and stone, with richly carved and ornamented lintels and eaves; its inhabitants were all rich. In some way or other, this was the outcome of the alliance of piracy and smuggling. When the French came they did not interfere with the town on their side of the stream, but on the top of a sugar-loaf hill, three-quarters of a mile back, they began to build a little fort, and under its guns they laid out a "citadel," inside which to locate the barracks, officers' quarters, magazines, &c. Among the first to be sent there was a civilian officer named Haitce. One day they were attacked by a band of Chinese soldiers. They resisted as long as possible and then fled; some were shot, some escaped, Haitce only was captured. He was taken back to a house in the principal street of the model little town of Monkay, tied down upon a table, and skinned alive.

Now, at this time, the famous Colonel Dugenne was in command of the Foreign Legion in Tongking. Everybody knows what the Foreign Legion is—almost the only force in the world where a sound man is enlisted instantly without a question being asked. No matter what your nationality, what your colour, what your past, you are welcome in the Foreign Legion. A man may even desert from the regular French army and re-enlist, unquestioned, in this heterogeneous force. In return for this preliminary indulgence, however, you must put up with many inconveniences—the worst climates, the hardest work, the front line of the attack, the forlorn hope, and the most iron discipline. Once out of civilised parts, and there is practically only one punishment in the Foreign Legion—the punishment that can only be awarded once. To keep such a body of men

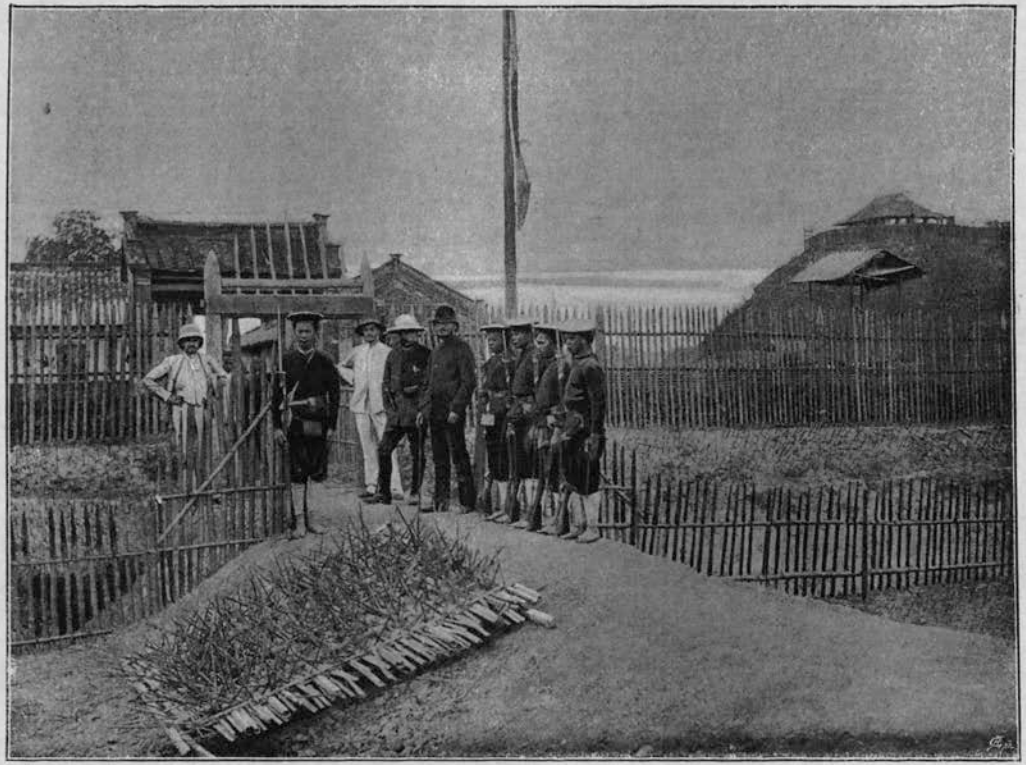
in order, this is perhaps necessary, and the officers to enforce it must be hard men—men with bodies of steel and hearts of stone. And the hardest of them all was Colonel Dugenne. Some day I must tell the stories I heard of his methods of pacification in Tongking. When the authorities learned of the outrage I have described, they understood that it was no use to wipe it out with rose-water. So they sent Colonel Dugenne and his "children." He came and looked at the place. "Burn it," said he. But it wouldn't burn, being all brick and stone. "Blow it up," said Colonel Dugenne. And they did—they blew the whole town literally to bits. Compared with Monkay, Pompeii is in good preservation. You need an alpenstock to get through the streets. And the house where Haitce was tortured is now a hole in the ground twenty feet deep.

You are not long in discovering that Monkay is not like other places. As we were rowing up, a big red pheasant was sitting in a tree not twenty yards away. I picked up my rifle to try and shoot its head off, as I have done with partridges in the Maine woods. "Don't fire here," I was told; "the people at the fort would think there was trouble, and probably turn out a lot of men." The Resident, M. Rustant, walked down to meet us and take us to the Residency. This proved to be an old temple, or *pagode*, as the French call all native buildings, divided into rooms by board partitions, and very meagrely provided with modern furniture. Outside a six-foot moat was dug, and lined with spikes of bamboo so thickly that a hen could hardly walk about in it. On each side of the moat was a stockade built of heavy bamboo, eight feet high, and sharpened to a spike at the top. At each corner a look-out was built of sods and bamboo, in which a sentry stood always with a loaded rifle. The front of the Residency faced the river, where a little gun-boat lay at anchor. The back of it looked towards the frontier, and therefore the back entrance, with the kitchen and offices, was further protected with thick walls of sods *en échelon*, to guard against the bullets fired across at it from long range. The Resident's

guard consists of a hundred and twenty native militia, under two European officers. But at night as we sat at dinner in the cold, bare, cob-webbed, bat-tenanted central hall of the former temple, the door was pushed noisily open, and a night-guard of thirteen men and a sergeant of the Foreign Legion tramped past our chairs to an ante-room, and grounded their arms with a crash on the stone floor. At midnight we were awakened by the same tramp and crash as the guard was changed. And there is no "show pidgin" about this: all these men and their ball-cartridges may be needed at any minute.

Next morning we went to pay our respects to the commanding officer, and look round. First we climbed up to the *fortin* on the top of the sugar-loaf hill, where there were half-a-dozen light guns and a small force of French artillerymen, and into which no native is ever permitted to set foot. The frontier river winds along like a silver thread three-quarters of a mile off: the citadel is just below, and the half-dozen houses of the foreign population; and through a glass you can see the Chinese guns and soldiers in their own fort, on a similar hill, a couple of miles off, or less. All these guns, of course, are trained straight at one another. And over the hills you can see the telegraph wire connecting the furthest extremities of the Chinese Empire, stretching down into the town, a solid and prosperous-looking little place, like Monkay on this side before Colonel Dugenne blew it up. The French have no telegraph, but a line of heliograph to within a few miles of Haiphong, only allowed to be used for official messages. Indeed, there is nobody else to use it, although the Resident was kind enough to allow me to receive a private message from home by its aid.

Then we walked, always with an escort, through the ruins of the town down to the river. As we entered the street the quick eye of the Commandant caught sight of new marks on a blank brick wall. Climbing into the inside we discovered that somebody from across the frontier had come, probably during the preceding night, and actually loop-holed the wall for rifles,



At the Gate of the Fort, Monkay.

so that they could steal across the next moonlight night and pick off the sentries at the fort! From the arrangements made then and there, I fancy those gentry would get a reception to surprise them. The river which constitutes the actual frontier is only about forty yards wide, and can be forded at low tide. On the French side the bank is high, while the Chinese town is built almost down to the water's edge. As soon as we were seen on the opposite bank the Chinese soldiery came down to the river in crowds, in their bright yellow and red jackets, to stare at us, and when I set up my camera they evidently became rather nervous, thinking it a new engine of war. Indeed, the Commandant said, "Don't stay there any longer than is necessary; it's just possible they might take a pot-shot at us." Across this river, of course, not a soul ventures. If a Frenchman should try, his head would be off his shoulders, or worse, in five minutes. With a good deal of difficulty, I bribed a Chinaman to take a telegram across, addressed to Sir Robert Hart, in Peking, but they refused to despatch it, and sent it back. In fact, the relations between the French and Chinese are about as strained as they can possibly be. The Commandant pointed out to me a small cleared and levelled spot on the top of a hillock, and told me its gruesome story. Two months before my visit a block-house had stood there, garrisoned by a sergeant and six French soldiers and eight native regulars. One night the people at the fort suddenly heard rapid firing, and shortly afterwards the block-house burst into flames. The night was pitch dark, and it was no good for them to move out to the rescue, as they did not know that there were not a thousand Chinese, and, as the block-house was burning, their comrades had either escaped or been killed. At daylight they marched down and found the eight natives and five Europeans dead, the sergeant headless and horribly and indescribably mutilated, and one European missing—evidently carried off into China, as he was never heard of again. No wonder that a Chinaman from across the river who falls into French hands here gets a very

short shrift—generally about as long as it takes to pull a trigger. In fact, I believe any Chinaman at Monkay at night is shot on sight. The Chinese who come across on these murdering expeditions are not pirates at all, or "black flags," or dacoits, or anything of that kind; they are Chinese regulars, who leave their jackets behind and resume them on their return. And, of course, if the practice were not encouraged or at least winked at by the Chinese officials, it could not go on.

The native troops are not very smart soldiers, but they take kindly to the loose French discipline, and on several occasions they have fought very well indeed. Their dress consists of dark blue cotton knickerbockers and jacket, a little pointed bamboo hat, and a sash. They wear no shoes; and the only difference between the militia or civil guards and the regulars is that the sash and hat of the former are blue and of the latter red. At Monkay the total strength at the time of my visit was about seven hundred and fifty men—three hundred and fifty Europeans and four hundred natives—not nearly enough, the Commandant complained bitterly. Once as I stood with him in the fort he showed me a valley miles off, and said, "There are five hundred pirates over there. The day after to-morrow I am going out to say 'Bonjour' to them." And two days after I got back to Hongkong, I read in the newspaper that he had made his expedition, the Chinese had attacked his camp during the night, and that he had been the first man shot. "Don't forget to send me some of your photographs," he had said to me at the same time, when I was taking those which now illustrate this chapter; "they will be very dramatic." A Customs officer named Carrière was captured and carried off by pirates last year. Three Frenchmen, MM. Roty, Bouyèr, and Droz-Fritz were captured at different times in 1892, and kept prisoners for many months before their surrender was effected. And in August of the present year the Chinese made a raid at Monkay, killed a M. Chaillet in his own house, and carried off his wife and child. So the Franco-Chinese frontier is still a place that "repays careful avoidance."

CHAPTER VI.

A STUDY OF FRENCH COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION.

SOCIETY in French Indo-China is sharply divided into three classes, and each of the three is at daggers drawn with the other two. They are the official, the military, and the civilian —the Governor-General, the Colonel, and the Colonist. To the official eye the military class is constantly endeavouring to usurp functions to which it has no right, and the civilians are an unreasonable body of incapable people, impossible to satisfy. The military class are furious against the Government, represented by the officials, for their reduced numbers, and cling all the more tenaciously to privileges which only belonged to them as an army of occupation; and they desire to be allowed a free hand to "pacify" the country by the only means known to them —the sword. The civilian colonist, finally, detests the military, in the conviction that if he could only once get rid of nearly all of them the country would "pacify" itself fast enough by commerce and agriculture, which it will never do so long as it is a happy hunting-ground for crosses and promotions. And how can he feel either respect or sympathy for the Governors who come and go like the leaves on the trees, and who must needs hold the helm in Hanoi with their eyes fixed on the Quai d'Orsay? Society in the French colonies of the Far East is a perpetual triangular duel.

Let me give a few of the experiences upon which this analysis is based. The first person with whom I had any conversation after setting foot of Tongking was a well-informed, intelligent

bourgeois who had passed six years there. I began by saying I was sorry to hear of the heavy casualties of a column then operating in the interior, a hundred men having been lost in one action. "He'll arrive, all the same," replied my acquaintance, speaking of the officer in command. "He wants his third star, and what does he care if it costs him five hundred men? He'll get it, too, *allez!*" There is the civilian's view of the military. Now for the functionary's view, and I should not tell this story if M. Richaud's terrible death—let me throw a word of recollection and respect over his "vast and wandering grave"—had not untied my tongue. When I was at Hanoi I asked him, on the strength of my French official letter, for an escort of a few men to accompany me to a place one day's march into the interior. "Certainly," he replied, "with pleasure. They shall be ready the day after to-morrow." The same evening I was dining with him, and when I entered the drawing-room he took me on one side and said, "By the way, about that escort, I am exceedingly annoyed, but it is impossible." And answering my look of surprise, for my official letter had been given for the very purpose of making such facilities certain, he continued: "The General replies that he has not five men of whom he can dispose at this moment. Frankly, you know, you should properly have asked him in the first place, and not me." The Governor-General's annoyance and embarrassment at having to acknowledge to a stranger this humiliating snub were so visible that of course I dropped the subject, and his secretary's whispered request afterwards not to reopen it was unnecessary. But I could not help asking him next day as we were driving whether in French colonies, as in English, the chief civil authority was not *ex officio* commander-in-chief. He saw the point instantly and replied, "Yes, that is my title too," and after a pause—"*seulement, je délégue mes pouvoirs.*" After thus being refused an escort, I was refused permission to go alone at my own risk, so my proposed journey was doubly impossible. At the time the General had not five

men "disponibles" there were, of course, twenty times that number kicking their heels in barracks. The Governor had promised the escort, therefore the General refused it. That was the only and the universal explanation offered me. And it was the true one.

To pass on again to the civilian colonist. Half way up the river between Haiphong and Hanoi I noticed heaps of fresh mud lying along the bank. "Then you have been dredging, after all?" I asked. "Hush," was the reply; "we have been doing a little of it at night, because the Administration would not allow us to do it openly, and we stuck here every day." Why not? Heaven only knows. It is simply incredible, and therefore I will not waste time in attempting to enumerate what "l'Administration" denies. It is, as Mephistopheles described himself to Faust, *der Geist der stets verneint*. Whatever you want, though it cost the Government not a penny, though it be a boon to the community, though it be the opening-up of the country so enthusiastically toasted, the authorities are absolutely certain to refuse your request. Said a French civilian, "Les consuls français ne sont bons que pour vous donner tort quand vous avez raison." This is no joke—if you think so, stop the first man, not a "functionary," you meet in the street in Haiphong and ask him. It is almost as easy to get into Parliament in London as to get a concession of land for any purpose whatever in Tongking, although the whole vast country is on public offer, although the land almost throws its crops and its minerals in your face, and although the inhabitants are "pirates" by thousands simply and solely for the employment and sustenance which welcomed capital and encouraged enterprise alone can furnish. This point has been urged frankly and strongly by a French critic who is intimately acquainted with Tongking:—"Soyez certain que si la pacification du Tonkin est si longue, cela tient surtout à ce que nous n'avons pas su empêcher la misère qui pousse les indigènes au brigandage. Si l'on avait laissé le champ libre à l'esprit d'entreprise, si l'on avait appelé

l'élément indigène, à tous les degrés de l'échelle sociale, à participer au développement de notre nouvelle colonie, la pacification serait bien avancée, sinon achevée. Au lieu de nos 15,000 hommes pourchassant des pirates, nous verrions, à l'heure qu'il est, ces mêmes pirates employés paisiblement à des travaux publics, car, il ne faut pas nous le dissimuler, nos ouvriers de demain sont les pirates d'aujourd'hui, les cultivateurs d'hier, chassés de chez eux par nos procédés belliqueux de ces dernières années."

It is the fact, though it seems almost incredible, that after all these years of French administration, the scores of military expeditions, the spending of countless millions of francs, the loss of tens of thousands of lives, Tongking is only "pacified" so far as the delta is concerned. The rest of the country is not safe from one day to another, and almost every transport of valuables has to have a military convoy. Within the last year a number of Europeans have been carried off and only a few weeks ago a train was actually stopped and pillaged while but a short distance from the capital. Mr. Consul Tremlett, whose Report from Saigon is dated February 25, 1894, writes of Tongking as follows:—"The delta may be considered as being fairly under control, but, apart from that, the province is continually raided by so-called pirates. There are now at least three Frenchmen in captivity of whose fate the public knows nothing; they are no doubt being held for ransom." One of these, an official, was captured at Sin-gam, not 40 miles from Hanoi, upon a line which is running several trains a day, and not a hundred yards from a military post. And at the close of 1893 the *Courrier d'Haiphong* said: "Since two years, not a month, not a week has passed without reports of shots exchanged, gangs of 'pirates' broken up, engagements more or less bloody. The number of 'pirates' has certainly not diminished, and their audacity has increased." For my own part, I should not be surprised to hear at any time of a new outburst of "piracy" on a large scale, supported by the Chinese across the frontier.

If the government of Tongking were administering a hostile province which it desired to crush out of existence, it could not do much better than follow the tactics pursued almost without interruption since the colony was created. I have told how it refuses privileges, and when it does give them, what are they, too often? Shortly before my arrival, a concession had been given for the "Magasins Généraux" at Haiphong, a monopoly of Custom-house examination in the warehouses and on the wharves of one firm, to whom and whose terms everybody was obliged to come. In vain the whole community protested and protested. The monopoly was granted, and Chambers of Commerce of both Haiphong and Hanoi immediately and unanimously resigned, and the Chinese merchants sent in a declaration that unless this additional restriction were removed they would leave in a body. And a single example will show the practical evil of this monopoly. The storage of coal per ton per month cost at that time (for comparison I employ French currency) at Hongkong (Kowloon Godowns) 20 centimes; at Shanghai (Jardine, Matheson & Co.) 28 centimes; at Haiphong (Magasins Généraux) 4 francs! One resolution of the Chambers of Commerce was truly pathetic. The Government consulted us, they said, and then took no notice whatever of all our representations. It is therefore useless to maintain an institution whose powers are purely illusory. Please let us go.

Again, take the matter of railways. Everybody you meet in the Far East will assure you that the jobbery in connection with the extension of railways in Tongking passes description. I cannot, of course, speak from personal or certain knowledge upon this point, but the reader may be invited to consider for a moment the scale of railway concessions now pending there. M. de Lanessan has sanctioned the following: To MM. Vézin and Raveau, a line of 700 kilometres from Hanoi to Hué and Tourane; to MM. Soupé and Raveau, a line of 800 kilometres from Saigon to Tourane and Hué; to the same, a line of steam

tramway from Hanoi to Phu-lang-thuong; to M. Portal, who represents the Kebao mines and a syndicate of Paris capitalists, first, a line of 450 kilometres from Kebao, on the coast, to Laokay, on the Chinese frontier; second, a line from Kebao to Langson; third, a line from Haiphong to Sontay (one would have supposed this to be almost a physical impossibility); fourth, a line from Hanoi to Thai Nguyen; fifth, a line from Kebao to Monkay, on the frontier. A condition of this last set of concessions is that all the materials for the railways shall be supplied from France, and that the locomotives shall consume only fuel mined in Tongking. Thus a premium is put upon failure to begin with. The railway from Saigon to Khone, again, is to cost about 16,500,000 francs for 410 kilometres, the Colony having agreed to pay 500,000 francs per annum for it, if the home Government will pay the remaining seven-eighths of the cost. And another concession is promised for a line from Tien-Yen, on the coast, *viâ* Seven Pagodas and Hanoi, to Laokay (obviously including one of the concessions mentioned above), to cost 40,000,000 dollars. Now I say nothing, for I know nothing, about jobbery in these concessions, but I am at liberty to ask what prospect there is of any capital being honestly put into such enterprises, and what prospect there is of their paying their way, in view of a few facts known to everybody. Take the case of the "Compagnie Française des Charbonnages du Tonkin." After the most tenacious and romantic efforts, a concession was obtained in 1887 by M. Davier-Chauffour to develop the coal mines of Hongay. The course of the negociations reads like a chapter from an Oriental "Arabian Nights." To make an indisputable legal tender a ship was chartered to carry 100,000 silver dollars to Tongking, where the whole foreign population turned out armed to escort the bullock-carts carrying the twenty-five wooden cases through the streets. Refused there, the dollars were taken on board again and carried to the court of Annam, the ship narrowly escaping destruction in a typhoon. Then they were brought back to Haiphong,

where the authorities finally accepted them. Now this concession appears to be—I speak, of course, without the least claim to expert knowledge—of the greatest value. At a place called Campha, I have seen a "boulder-stream" of remarkably pure antimony, 3,000 yards long with an average thickness of 20 feet, and I have stood on a solid block of pure oxide of antimony weighing 16 tons. In the same concession I saw a vein of oxide of cobalt measuring 100 yards by 500 by one yard. And from a little further north I have seen remarkable specimens of copper ore. Infinitely more important, however, than all these, are the coal-fields. For years the existence of these was well known, and many times the commanders of French gunboats, who had been struck by the multitude of outcrops, sent home reports calling attention to them and to the enormous advantages which would accrue to France if they could be successfully worked. The Société has spent millions of francs upon these, it has built lines of railway, it has created a town and a harbour, it has employed thousands of miners, it has erected machinery, sunk shafts and driven galleries under the direction of the most experienced engineers it could secure. I have been over the whole of the workings twice and into every one of the galleries, and even taken photographs of the miners at work. So I can speak with some confidence. As regards the quantity of coal, it is practically inexhaustible. There are millions of tons in sight and nobody can guess how much lies below. I have been in a score galleries, each of them in a solid seam from 10 to 20 feet thick. At Hatou there are seven seams side by side, aggregating 54 feet of coal. And yet these were merely the preliminary works of prospecting. The "Marguerite Mine" at Hongay is simply a great mountain of coal.

A few years ago the French Ministries of Marine and the Colonies sent out a distinguished mining engineer, M. E. Sarran, on a special mission to report upon the mines of Tongking. After tests in the laboratory, at sea, and upon briquettes, he wrote of the Hongay coals as follows: "Our opinion is that

Tongking possesses an immense wealth of excellent combustible that the navy may employ with marked advantage over all other coals of the China seas and Australia, rivalling Anzin and Cardiff by its extreme purity, by the absence of iron pyrites, and by a development of heat at the very least equal to that furnished by these coals." These coals are selling at a first-rate price in Hongkong to-day, they have been supplied by contract to a number of British lines and to the French navy, they have been reported favourably upon by British men-of-war, and there is no longer any possible doubt as to their value. The Société has recently set up machinery for making briquettes, or patent fuel, out of the coal-dust, and a preliminary order was given for 10,000 tons by the French Government for the navy. The first two lots offered were refused as not up to the required standard, but were accepted at a lower price, and on April 19th of this year new trials were made in the presence of M. Jaouin, Engineer of the Navy and Director of the Workshops. The following were the results obtained: Weight of water vaporised by a kilo of briquettes, 7·57 (the contract demanded 6·50, and the first trial had given 5·698); ash and clinkers, 8·11 per cent. (the contract allowed 27 per cent., and the first trial had given 56·30 per cent.). The Superior Commission of Examination unanimously recommended the acceptance of the consignment. I am not in possession of the latest returns, but the output from the Hongay mines from January 1 to April 22, 1894, was 35,716 tons. The actual shipments during this time were 36,721 tons, and 9,000 tons were left in stock. Of the deliveries to customers, 40 per cent. was first-class screened coal, and the rest smaller grades. Now my reason for going thus into the details of a single enterprise is simple. Here is a commercial undertaking of the very best character, the results of which are proved beyond doubt, in the French colony of Tongking, where are also the railways I am discussing. Yet from beginning to end the local authorities have done nothing but obstruct the Société in every way. The whole of the capital, with trifling exceptions,

has been found by two British subjects in Hongkong, Messrs. Chater and Mody, to whom and whose money the development of this Tongking wealth is wholly due. Again and again have they tried to induce French capitalists to take a share of the burden. I believe this is now about to be accomplished, but I am speaking of the past. Moreover, the most childish restrictions have been enforced, of which one may be given as a specimen. No man not a French subject may be employed by the Société in any capacity. That is, if the directors desired to obtain a report upon the value of their property or upon the best means of developing it, from a distinguished British or American expert, they could not charge his fee to the accounts of the Société, but would have to pay him out of their own pockets as a purely private matter. Such are some of the conditions and history of investment in Tongking, while the country is starving for want of capital, and "pirates" hold possession of the greater part of it for want of opportunity to work for wages. I ask, therefore, what are the prospects of these tremendous railway concessions I have enumerated, or what reason is there to think that they are *bonâ fide* commercial investments? The reply is obvious.

These huge concessions have been granted right and left, apparently by the fiat of M. de Lanessan, while the really essential line from Hanoi to Langson, for which trade is actually waiting, was begun in 1889, and although the route is an easy one and the total distance from Phu-lang-thuong to Langson is but 72 miles, it has only reached the station of Song-hoa, a distance of 31½ miles. In addition to this, there is the stretch between Hanoi and Phu-lang-thuong, and that between Langson and Bi-ni or Lang-nac on the frontier, to be built before the trade of the district of Lungchow, estimated at 3,000,000 dollars annually, can be tapped. Yet M. Étienne officially promised to the Chamber of Deputies that the line should be completed by the end of 1891. If the French, both official and private, were really in earnest about their railways,

it is evident that they would have devoted every franc and every effort in their power to complete their one promising line before launching out upon a score of other questionable lines. Finally, in support of my whole argument, I may quote the following passage from Mr. Consul Tremlett's latest Report: "The Saigon-Mytho railway is always in evidence; it cost, although constructed along a great highway, over 200,000 francs per kilometre (crossing two rivers), or about 15,000,000 francs altogether; it has now been in existence some seven years, but has rendered no real service to trade."

Lest it be thought that there is exaggeration or prejudice in these suggestions of impropriety in the administration of French Indo-China, I will reproduce a passage from the verbatim official report of the discussion of the national Budget of 1891 in the Chamber of Deputies. M. Étienne, Under-secretary of State for the Colonies, was making a long and important speech in explanation and defence of the portion of the Budget relating to the Colonies. He was interrupted at one moment by M. Clémenceau, and the following conversation occurred:—

M. CLÉMENCEAU. While you are still upon the question of Tongking will you be good enough to say a word to us about the exemptions from the customs duties? That is one of the important points of the Report of M. le Myre de Vilers. You have forgotten to speak of it.

M. ÉTIENNE. M. Clémenceau points out to me that the Governor-General has taken it upon himself to exempt from import duties certain classes of goods intended for young industries in Tongking and Annam. He declares that the Governor-General had not the right to deprive the Budget of the Protectorate of these receipts. I reply that the Governor-General acted by virtue of the powers which he holds from the State; he has done what is done—I am obliged to say it—in the other colonies. The Councils-General, when a customs tariff has been voted and has received the sanction of the Council of State, have the right to reduce duties without incurring remarks from any one.

M. LEYDET. In favour of private persons?

M. ÉTIENNE. Precisely.

M. CLÉMENCEAU. Then there is no law any more.

M. ÉTIENNE. It is the Constitution.

A MEMBER OF THE LEFT. It is the absence of a Constitution!

M. ÉTIENNE. It is thus.

M. LE COMTE DE MONTFORT. Then everything is explained! *

* *Journal Officiel*, November 28, 1890, p. 2295.

The reporter says that "mouvements divers" took place in the Chamber at M. Étienne's admission. It would have been surprising had this not been so, for it is of course obvious that when the Council-General—that is to say, the Governor-General—may exact customs duties from one person and exempt another from them, the door is opened wide to every kind of political scandal.

I might fill pages with other examples of French administration and colonial methods. For example, a few months ago the price of the dollar was fixed at 3 francs by order of the Governor-General, at a time when the commercial price of it was from 2·70 to 2·75 francs. Some speculators purchased 200,000 dollars at the latter price and sent them to Hanoi. They were accepted by the Treasury there, and remitted at the official price of 3 francs. Thus the speculators made some 55,000 francs, while the Government lost the same sum. Again, a Paris paper tells of a contract which was given to a local firm to demolish a part of the old citadel of Hanoi. This is described as a very simple operation, the cost of which would have been met by the value of the materials accruing to the contractor. But the contractor received 40,000 dollars for his work, and a concession of nearly 100 hectares of land in the town of Hanoi to boot, the value of land there being often as much as 5 dollars the metre. Thus, adds the paper in question, the contractors received a present of about 400,000 dollars. Again, the Chinese capitation tax is the subject of much natural criticism. In one year this was farmed out for Cambodia to a Chinaman for 72,000 dollars, though his predecessor had only paid 32,000 dollars, and as the number of Chinese had not increased to any great extent it is obvious that he would make up the difference—indeed, that he was expected to make it up—by additional "squeezes" from his unfortunate compatriots.

There are in France a few publicists and politicians who have made a special study of French colonisation, and the opinions of these men are expressed with the greatest sense and modera-

tion. But to the ordinary French writer the colonies are a sealed book. His equipment for discussing them consists of a vague sentimental idea that colonies mean strength and commerce and glory, and since he is generally actuated, as Lord Rosebery has just said, by a profound jealousy of Great Britain, and knows of her fame as a colonising nation, he insists that France must be a colonising nation too. He does not stop to reflect that everything depends upon where the colonies are and how they are administered. In despair at the difficulty of obtaining French official facts and figures in any instructive shape I recently wrote to a friend at the head of one of the most important departments of the French Foreign Office, begging him to send me any volumes he could find on the subject. After some searching he was good enough to forward to me an official work bearing this description: "Ministère des Colonies. Protectorat de l'Annam et du Tonkin. Administration des Douanes et Régies. Rapport Sommaire sur les Statistiques des Douanes et le Mouvement Commercial de l'Annam et du Tonkin en 1893." Here at last, I thought, is what I want, and indeed the volume contains many instructive figures to which I shall refer later. But it is evidently intended for popular circulation, and this is a specimen of its advice to the French emigrant:—

"We may affirm that in the very near future this country [Tongking] will offer a vast field to the emigration of our compatriots who till now have sought land and work in South America, but always under the conditions of economy mentioned above and of determined work. In the hill country and at slight altitudes the European can work in the fields all day long for five months of the year. For four other months he can work three hours in the morning and as much in the evening; while during the three months of great heat he must take precautions at all hours of the day, on account of the sun. Under these conditions the colonist can take his personal share (*contribuer personellement*) in the labours of clearing the land, planting, and teaching the natives he employs the use of French tools, which are greatly superior to the rudimentary tools used in the country."

It is difficult to comment upon this in fitting terms. To anybody who knows the East no comment will be necessary, and to those who do not hardly any words would bring home the truth,

so wildly preposterous is the suggestion that a European agricultural labourer should go out to work in the tropics with his spade and hoe. If the author of this book had suggested to the native of Tongking that he should come to Paris and seek employment as a clerk, he would not have gone much further astray. Yet this is the kind of thing that is offered officially to French readers on the subject of French colonies.

In the preceding chapter I spoke in general terms of the proportion of "fonctionnaires," civil servants, to the French population of Indo-China. The details of this are so astonishing that they would hardly be credited from the mouth of a foreigner. I will therefore give a French official statement of them. M. Étienne, while Under-secretary of State for the Colonies and speaking in defence of the Administration, made the following remarks about the state of things in Cochin-China:—

"What is the population of that country? It is 1,800,000 souls. There is a French population of 1,600 inhabitants, of whom 1,200 are 'fonctionnaires.' How is it administered? It has a Colonial Council: elected by whom? By the 1,200 'fonctionnaires,' who have also a deputy. And you expect that confusion and disorder will not reign in that country! How, indeed, can you expect an administration to work smoothly, when thanks to this system of organisation, all this world of 'fonctionnaires' throws itself into the electoral arena, and divides itself into two, three, or four camps, one supporting the actual President of the Colonial Council, another the Mayor of Saigon, another the deputy, another the candidates for deputy? . . . In 1887 I tried to reduce the number of the 'fonctionnaires.' I did reduce the cost of them to the extent of 3,500,000 francs out of 9,000,000. I took that step in October, and in the following December the Ministry of which I was a member disappeared. Six months later, the 'fonctionnaires' whom I had dismissed had all reappeared in Cochin-China."* When this is admitted by the defenders of a system there is nothing

* Chambre des Députés, Séance du 27 Novembre, 1890.

left for its critics to say. In the very same year that the salaries of the "fonctionnaires" of Cochin-China amounted to £360,000, the sum spent upon public works in the Colony—the one expenditure upon which the entire productive future of such a place must depend—was £16,000! But even this pitiful figure is far from telling the whole astounding truth. When the "mouvement prolongé" which followed his words had died away, M. Étienne continued: "And while public works in the present year are only represented by £16,000, what do you think is the sum allotted to the *personnel* of the public works department? It is £16,000—£16,000 worth of *personnel* out of £16,000 worth of public works!" That is, not a centime of work was done. Moreover, during the years when millions of francs were spent on public works in Cochin-China, what was there actually done to show for it? "Only a few roads round Saigon"—"routes luxueuses," according to M. de Lanessan elsewhere, "pour les fonctionnaires qui vont se promener le soir autour de Saigon." It is fortunate in the interests of truth that we have these facts from the lips of responsible Ministers and ex-Ministers; as I said, nobody would have believed them from the mouth of a foreign critic. We owe the revelations to a curious and amusing circumstance. There is a cynical proverb to the effect that when mothers-in-law fall out, we get at the family facts. And all this information arose from a falling-out between M. Étienne and M. le Myre de Vilers. As "rapporteur," the latter had bitterly attacked the financial *régime* of the former. M. Étienne retorted that however bad things might be at that moment, they were much worse when M. le Myre de Vilers was Governor of Cochin-China. M. le Myre de Vilers protested against the expenditure for eleven carriages for the service of the Governor. M. Étienne replied that his critic had himself had eleven carriages and had spent more money upon them. M. le Myre de Vilers criticised the sum of 12,000 francs which M. Piquet was spending as Governor in secret services. M. Étienne retorted that M. le

Myre de Vilers himself had spent 15,000 francs. Finally, when the duel had at the same time delighted and shocked the Chamber for an hour the combatants exchanged a couple of terrific blows, and sank exhausted. M. Étienne produced a set of dreadful figures showing that expenditure had risen by leaps and bounds in all directions during M. le Myre de Vilers' tenure of office in Cochin-China. This blow his adversary made no attempt to parry, but riposted with the proof that whereas M. Étienne was posing as the reformer of administrative methods, he was himself directly and personally responsible for the extreme centralisation which had produced the very evils he was deploring. In support of this he read two despatches from M. Étienne to himself, ordering that every change in *personnel* in the Colony should in future be submitted by him to M. Étienne in Paris, before it was made. "Thus," he concluded, "M. the Under-secretary of State for the Colonies reserves to himself every nomination, and M. the Governor-General has not the right to appoint a school-master!" Such an effect did this instructive duel produce upon the Chamber that the Budget was adopted by the small majority of 85 in a total vote of 483, and this only after the Ministry had made a series of impassioned appeals to the memory of the thousands of Frenchmen who had laid down their lives for their country in Indo-China.

One recent French writer and traveller, I may add, has spoken out bluntly about Tongking. This is Prince Henri d'Orleans, who has certainly had abundant opportunities of seeing French colonial methods for himself. "Almost everywhere," he says, "there exists a latent antagonism, if indeed it is not overt, between the colonist and the Government." And this is his pronouncement about French colonial administration: "It is too numerous; it is partially composed of incapables and of men with bad antecedents; it is too ignorant and meddlesome; it endeavours to raise difficulties and to check all means of action; for the most part born of favouritism, it endeavours to indulge in the same practice and displeases those who

obtain what they apply for as well as those who are passed over." *

So much for the colonist and the Government impersonal. What is his attitude towards the personal Governor-General? He sees him come, he watches him while he is learning the A B C of Tongking affairs, he reads a few official decrees, he hears a few official after-dinner speeches, eulogizing France, Tongking and the colonist himself, and then some day a telegram comes and the colonist sees him go. The heads of the colonial Government succeed each other in Saigon and Hanoi like the figures of a shadow pantomime. M. Richaud boasted to me with a laugh that he was tolerated longer than any of his predecessors. His term of office had been thirteen months! † Before the Governor-General comes, he is unknown; while in the East even his public speeches are addressed to Paris; he returns and is forgotten. It is the merest farce of supervision, and what wonder that the colonist sinks deeper year by year in disgust and despair? He has described himself in a bitter epigram: "le colon est un prétexte à banquets." Instability is the dominant characteristic of French administration in the Far East. Does anybody seriously believe that the solid foundations of future prosperity can ever be laid in this shifting quicksand? For an Englishman who cares for France it is positively distressing to hear Frenchmen talk in Tongking. Fifty times during my two visits was it said to me, "Ah, if only you English had Tongking!" Matters have somewhat improved for them lately, and a new hostility to England has sprung up, but I seriously believe that if a secret ballot had been taken then, a majority of the French in Tongking would have voted,

* "Around Tonkin," 1894, pp. 88 and 423.

† This is the list of Governors-General since the creation of the "Union Indo-chinoise" by the decree of October 17, 1887:—M. Constans, Nov., '87–April, '88; M. Richaud, April, '88–May, '89; M. Piquet, May, '89–April, '91; M. Bideau, April, '91–June, '91; M. de Lanessan, April, '91, *en congé;* M. Chavassieux, March, '94, acting; M. de Lanessan. Between December, 1884, and November, 1887, there were ten Residents-General of Tongking—an average service of about three months.

in spite of their undying love of country, to hand over Indo-China to England. Then at least they would have been able to buy and sell, manufacture and import, create and develop, with no man to hamper them and no "Administration" to forbid. As it is, the French colonist's attitude to his government is summed up in the exclamation that I heard fall from the lips of one of them when he saw an official approaching him on duty—"Nom de Dieu!—voilà encore l'Administration qui arrive!"

But the shadows on the picture are not yet complete. First, as to the Chinese. Nobody can advocate more strongly than I the absolute necessity of keeping them out of a civilised settled Western country. But it is as plain as the nose on one's face that no colony in the Far East can dispense with them. Their labour, their easy and willing adaptability to any job by which money can be earned, from nursing the baby to driving the steam engine; their commercial insight and comparative trustworthiness,—these make them an ideal substratum for a new community, as Shanghai and Hongkong and Singapore and the Protected Malay States prove to demonstration. Yet Indo-China taxes them till they are giving up their established businesses, and puts a price on the head of each as he comes and again as he goes. The *impôt personnel* upon every Asiatic is from 7 dols. to 80 dols.; the *impôt des patentes* ranges from 2 dols. to 400 dols.; and the price of the passport without which no Asiatic can leave French territory is 2.50 dols.

Second, the port charges. Take the little steamer I returned in, the *Freyr*, 676 tons, from Randers, in Jutland. At the port of Newcastle she had paid £4; at Nagasaki 70 dols.; at Yokohama 50 dols.; at Hongkong 4 dols.; while to get in and out of the port of Haiphong costs her every trip 302.40 dols. And this, too, is only for the ship's charges, pure and simple. The charterer must pay a dollar and a half wharfage for every ton of cargo landed—say 750 dols. for an average cargo. Thus at a port where common sense teaches that trade should be tempted

and nursed in every possible way, the authorities begin by making trade all but impossible. There can hardly be a more needy port in the world than Haiphong, yet it is doubtful if there is a more expensive one. The consequences are inevitable and obvious.

Third, the enormous Customs duties of the "Tarif général." These need no specifying. Saigon prospered exceedingly under a free-trade *régime*, and she has been forced to give protection a good trial. What is the position of Saigon now? A critical, if not a hopeless one. Yet she long ago discovered that only one thing could save her. A unanimous report of the Chamber of Commerce concluded with these words in big type: "We demand the absolute abolition of the Customs régime in Cochin-China from January 1, 1889." Yet is there the faintest shadow of a coming change? On the contrary. In one of the last public speeches he made, at a banquet in Hanoi, M. Richaud exclaimed, "Renounce the chimerical hope of the return of absolute commercial liberty!" The subsidised newspaper added that this was followed by a "triple salve d'applaudissements." The only possible comment is, that the colonists of Hanoi who applauded that sentiment should be refused Christian burial, for they are suicides.

Again and again have the Colonies protested against these duties by every means at their command, and their protests have been supported by several of the most influential writers and administrators in France, such as M. Leroy-Beaulieu and M. le Myre de Vilers, but almost wholly in vain. Some slight ameliorations have been granted under the pressure of absolute necessity. A series of modifications in the "Tarif Général" have been applied to Indo-China, reducing the duties on a number of articles and abolishing them on others. And after it had become perfectly clear that transit trade to southern China through Tongking would not arise so long as customs duties were levied upon goods in transit, the authorities conceded a *détaxe* of 80 per cent. upon such goods. And when this was

proved to be prohibitive they took off the tax altogether. Thus what should have been dictated at the outset by an elementary knowledge of practical economics was only conceded after a long struggle and when it was enforced by necessity. I need hardly say, I presume, that the tariff is constructed primarily to keep out the manufactures of all nations except France, but in spite of this, as I shall show later, the trade between France and her colonies in Indo-China is a mere bagatelle, not to be compared for an instant with the subventions necessary to keep the colonies going. The foreigner is regarded as an enemy, and the most petty restrictions and partialities are adopted to handicap him. Here is an example which I take from the *London and China Express*: "On a firm whose total earnings in 1892 were 182 dollars, and in 1893 749 dollars, the resident of Annam imposed the *patente* to the modest sum of 316 dollars yearly." At the port of Haiphong French ships pay fifty centimes per ton, foreign ships one franc. At the "ports ouverts au commerce" French ships pay one cent. per ton, foreign ships ten cents. Will it be believed by those who only know France in Europe, and love her gallantry, her freedom from intellectual prejudice, and her constant striving after an ideal of equality, that France in the Far East positively bars her paying hospital at her chief port against foreign sufferers by a differential tariff? Yet this is the case. In the General Hospital at Saigon foreign seamen must pay 9½ francs a day and foreign officers 13 francs —charges just double what French patients of corresponding ranks have to pay. "I addressed the Governor upon the subject," says the British Consul, from whose last Report I take the fact, "pointing out that in the hospitals of Hongkong and Singapore no distinction was made as regards nationality, but no reply has as yet been received." Is it too much to say that a nation which deliberately does this has still to learn one of the first principles of civilisation?

The result of any careful study of French colonial administration in the Far East, as I have now perhaps shown alike from

my own investigations and the testimony of the best French critics both in France and on the spot, is therefore that Indo-China is grievously misgoverned. Instead of finding a helping hand, the French colonist encounters a closed fist. The "functionary," dressed in his little brief authority, has utterly forgotten that he is the servant of the colonist, that he has no other reason for existence except to aid and protect and encourage his self-exiled countryman. As it is, while the colonist is the blood of the new country, the "functionary" is the leech. Day by day the cry of the French colonial civilian goes up to heaven, "Pas tant d'Administration!" Everywhere else in the world, capital is welcomed, no matter whose pocket it comes out of. In French colonies alone gold must be stamped with "liberty, equality, and fraternity" before it is received, and a man must be a Frenchman before he is allowed to labour with the rest. The Revolution seems a joke when one learns in Tongking that one of the conditions attached to a concession is that nobody but Frenchmen shall be employed on it, and that a sick Englishman or German must pay twice as much for his bed in the hospital as a sick Frenchman. I do not believe there is another country in the world which would make such a pitiful stipulation. Does France not know what is done in her name? or is she not ashamed, remembering '89, to adopt such an attitude to-day before the world?

In conclusion I will say simply this. I believe, as every one who has looked into the matter believes, that Tongking might have a prosperous future under the control of a colonising nation. But I know, as everybody who has looked into the matter knows, that she will never reach it along the present road. A certain permanency of appointment for the Governor-General; a relaxing of restrictions upon the colonists all round; a hundred times more respect paid by officials to colonial wishes and requests; far greater consideration for native rights and sentiments; the encouragement of the Chinese; a glad welcome to capital and enterprise from any source; an immediate and

equable reduction of the tariff; the decentralisation of authority;—these are some of the primal conditions of progress. If they do not come, then France may prepare for the humiliation which the very name of "Indo-China" will ultimately carry with it. In the words of the editor of the *Courrier d'Haiphong*, "To continue as at present means the loss of Indo-China—it means the ruin of French influence in the Far East."

CHAPTER VII.

THE COST OF A FRENCH COLONY.

IN preceding chapters I have endeavoured by a brief description of the external aspects of the French colonies in the Far East to place before the reader a picture of the results in life and administration which have been attained in about thirty-six years. And by my own criticisms, supported by the testimony of distinguished French writers and speakers, I have tried to show how completely France has misunderstood the problem she set herself to solve, and how persistently and wilfully her administrators have taken the wrong road. These criticisms, however, have been for the most part in general terms, whereas to produce an adequate effect they should be proved to demonstration by actual facts. What one man affirms, another may deny. Without figures a criticism may be dismissed as largely a matter of opinion. I decided, therefore, to collect from French official sources the figures relating to a typical French colony; first, concerning its cost, and second, concerning its returns: that is, to draw up a national balance-sheet for this one national enterprise, in the form of a debit and credit account.

If I had foreseen what this decision involved, I should not have attempted the task at this time. I had, however, no suspicion of the extraordinary complexities of French official finance and the difficulties, amounting almost to impossibility, which beset any one, not a professed statistician, who attempts

to disentangle the plain fact from the mountains of figures. The French as a nation are addicted to the exact sciences, and this national proclivity comes to its finest flower in the French Budget. It is issued every year in a number of volumes; it is subdivided in the most elaborate manner; it contains the minutest details upon every possible point; it is arranged on a theoretical system so arbitrary that a lifetime would hardly be too long to enable one to grasp its principles. If you desire to learn the details of the movements in the potato-market, or the duty upon areca-nut collected in Cambodia, the French Budget with its local additions will satisfy your curiosity at once. If, however, you desire to calculate the cost of a French colony through a series of years, you must unite the path-finding instincts of a Red Indian with the patience of the patriarch and a willingness to believe that no contradiction is involved when 1,000 francs in one book appears as 1,200 in another. Moreover, the French are never satisfied with their own official statistics: they are constantly varying the form and polishing the principle. And after prolonged investigation one is forced to the conclusion that the body of statisticians desires to remain a close corporation, and to construct out of its own figures an impenetrable barrier to exclude the impertinent independent inquirer. No sooner, for example, have you discovered in what way a certain fact of finance is presented during a series of years than you are brought up short at a foot-note explaining that by a "mouvement d'ordre" this fact has been transferred to another portion of the Budget and incorporated in a wholly different series of tables. One of the most accomplished French statisticians, M. de Foville, whose handbook is or should be upon the desk of every writer about France, frankly admits all this. "Nothing is more dangerous," he says, "than amateur statistics, where errors swarm, and which prove everything that one desires to prove. The only way effectually to combat this false statistic is to put true statistics within the reach of all—to make the truth in relation to econo-

mical and social questions very accessible in the first place, and very intelligible in the second. But this point has not yet been reached, especially in France. A hundred times we have heard men, who were certainly not the first comers, express their regret that it is so difficult to obtain exact information upon even the most common facts of the national life." * And even while I was gathering the figures which follow, M. Leroy-Beaulieu, certainly the most capable of living Frenchmen in such matters, has lifted up his voice in a complaint which echoed my own growing despair. He says: "Quite at the end of the last session, at the sitting of July 24, 1894, M. Poincaré laid upon the table the 'rectified project' of the Budget for 1895. This 'rectified project,' very far from being final, is the subject of new manipulations and rectifications. Our unhappy Budgets are retouched and altered to such an extent that it is impossible to recognise them or to find one's way about in them." † As an example of this lack of finality, I may add that a French Budget, whether national or colonial, is not closed until years after the date of its appearance. Thus the Tongking Budget of 1891, for example, may appear in one shape in 1890, in another in 1891, in still another in 1892, and possibly even in a fourth in 1893.

After the above it will easily be understood that I put in no claim for the completeness of my own figures. They are the result of many weary days of research both in London and in the official libraries in Paris; and I doubt if there is a contemporary French book of reference which I have not examined. More than once I have been on the point of giving up the task, but I have reflected that this would be to leave the lesson untaught, since it is very improbable that any Frenchman will desire in the present state of colonising enthusiasm to become the mouthpiece of facts so unpleasant to the majority of his fellow-countrymen. I claim only, how-

* Alf. de Foville, "La France Économique," 1887, p. i.

† *Journal des Débats*, November 3, 1894.

ever, that the following figures have been conscientiously sought, and I present them as an attempt to answer a question of the greatest interest, until some more skilful investigator shall correct them. Complete and final accuracy, I may add, will never be attained by anybody, since in not a few instances the official figures are hopelessly self-contradictory.*

I have chosen Tongking as the typical French colony because of the amount of discussion that has already raged around it, and because the whole of its history is included within a modern and comparatively brief period. It will be remembered that Tongking was under the suzerainty of Annam when the French became possessed of the latter country in 1862, the Annamese having driven out the Chinese long before, although China still claimed suzerainty, as she has done over every country adjoining her vast empire. The explorations of Senez, Harmand, Dupuis, and, above all, of Francis Garnier, the most gallant and devoted explorer France has ever had, filled up the interval until 1873, the year of what has been called the first Tongking expedition. Garnier seized the delta of Tongking in the winter of 1873, declared the Red River open to commerce, and was killed in an ambush on December 21st. The following years were remarkable chiefly for the explorations of M. de Kergaradec—a naval lieutenant and French Consul at Hanoi—and those of a rapidly increasing number of French officers and travellers. Up to 1882 nothing further had been accomplished, except theoretical work. In March, 1882, Rivière was despatched to Tongking with two ships and four hundred men to bring the anomalous situation to an end. He fought several actions against the Black Flags, but his force was too small to enable him to do anything of importance, and he

* "Comme nous l'avons fait remarquer dans notre précédente edition de cet ouvrage, nos documents statistiques coloniaux officiels se contredisent sans cesse." —Leroy-Beaulieu, "De la Colonisation chez les peuples modernes," Paris, 1891 p. 557, *note*.

remained for nearly a year virtually a prisoner in the citadel of Hanoi. At last the French Government, under the famous ministry of Jules Ferry, voted credits and reinforcements, and as soon as these arrived Rivière attacked and was killed in the sortie of May 19, 1883, under circumstances which I have previously described. When this news reached France, a wave of colonial and military enthusiasm broke over the country, and the Chamber and the Senate unanimously voted a credit of 5,300,000 francs, and a powerful expedition was despatched under General Bouët and Admiral Courbet.

At this moment, therefore, the history of Tongking may be said to begin, and the calculation of its cost accordingly commences here, although of course not a little money had been previously spent in the country. For the next four years French treasure and French lives were spent with so lavish a hand that at last France became thoroughly alarmed at the outlook; and after General Négrier had attacked and captured Langson in defiance of orders, had been driven out by the Chinese and mortally wounded, and Colonel Herbinger had lost control of himself and retreated precipitately in the most discreditable manner, public opinion turned against Tongking, and the Ferry Ministry succumbed to an onslaught by M. Clémenceau on March 30, 1885. This first chapter of the financial history of Tongking presents the following figures :—

	Francs.*
1883	14,858,900
1884	73,250,368
1885	115,694,415†
1886	65,998,696
	269,802,379

In four years, therefore, France had spent, at the most moderate computation that could be made, nearly two hundred

* These figures are taken from M. Jules Ferry, "Le Tonkin et la Mère-Patrie," 1890, p. 386, a source in which they are not likely to be found exaggerated.

† In 1885 and 1886 the credits voted were 164,385,512 and 75,203,901 francs respectively, but I have taken the sums described as actually spent.

and seventy millions of francs. The preliminaries of peace with China were signed at Paris on April 4, 1885.

For the second chapter, from 1887 to the estimated Budget of 1894, I have collected the figures from the national Budget of each year. They present the following results :—

	From France.*	From Cochin-China.	Totals.
	Francs.	Francs.	Francs.
1887	30,000,000†	11,000,000	41,000,000
1888	19,800,000	11,000,000‡	30,800,000
1889	15,615,000	11,000,000	26,615,000
1890	12,450,000	11,000,000	23,450,000
1891	10,450,000	11,000,000	21,450,000
1892	10,450,000	8,000,000	18,450,000
1893	24,450,000	5,000,000	29,450,000
1894	24,450,000	4,700,000	29,150,000
	147,665,000	72,700,000	220,365,000

Thus, during the eight years which have followed the establishment of peace and the final passing of Tongking under French dominion, France has spent over two hundred and twenty millions of francs. We therefore arrive at the following first estimate of the cost of Tongking :—

	Francs.
1883–1886	269,802,379
1887–1894	220,365,000
Total	490,167,379

I am prepared to show, however, that even this enormous figure is a long way short of the fact. The French official

* Inclusive of the subvention for the Tongking submarine cable.

† In round numbers—from Jules Ferry.

‡ In the Budget, "Service Colonial," for 1888, this figure appears as only 1,727,000 francs, but as M. Étienne said in the Chamber of Deputies when presenting the Budget of 1891, "Nous avons demandé, en effet, 11 millions à la Cochin-Chine en 1887, et nous avons dû, en 1888, en 1889, et en 1890, lui réclamer la même somme," I have made 1888 no exception to this regular credit. The difference probably appears in some other part of the Budget, where it has escaped my search.

figures for the Budget of the Protectorate of Annam and Tongking, from 1887 to 1891, are the following:—

"SITUATION DES RECETTES ET DES DÉPENSES DU BUDGET DU PROTECTORAT DE L'ANNAM ET DU TONKIN."*

Budget de	Recettes.		Dépenses.	
	Francs.		Francs.	
	Ordinaires.	Extraordinaires.	Ordinaires.	Extraordinaires.
1887	11,377,104†	58,266,566	11,392,485	58,251,185
	69,643,670		69,643,670	
1888	13,572,132	37,297,210	10,292,093	40,577,249
	50,869,342		50,869,342	
1889	15,445,626	37,007,534	12,905,562	39,547,598
	52,453,160		52,453,160	
1890	15,297,415	32,269,398	17,775,176	29,791,637
	47,566,813		47,566,813	
1891	18,814,721	24,765,079	16,594,789	26,985,012
	43,579,801		43,579,801	

These budgets, it will be noticed, balance in a manner to provoke the most sceptical examination. A little investigation shows that the system of subdivision into "Recettes ordinaires," "Recettes extraordinaires," "Dépenses ordinaires," and "Dépenses extraordinaires," is misleading in the extreme. The "ordinary receipts" mean simply and properly enough the revenue raised locally. The "ordinary expenditure" similarly

* Every figure in this table and in that which immediately follows it was very courteously furnished to me by the Ministère des Colonies, for which I beg here to return my best thanks. I have altered the arrangement of the figures, to display them more instructively, but all the sums and the theoretical form of the budgets are absolutely official. I have ventured to omit the centimes.

† These budgets appear originally in dollars. Up to and including 1892 the dollar is reckoned at 4 francs, in 1893 at 3.33 francs, and in 1894 at 3 francs. All these gold-prices of the dollar, it is perhaps needless to say, were in excess of the facts of exchange.

means the cost of the civil administration of the country. The "extraordinary receipts" mean neither more nor less than the exact sum necessary to make up the deficit in the "ordinary receipts," *plus* the cost to the mother country of the military and naval operations.* I do not say that this system was adopted for the purpose of throwing dust in the eyes of the casual inquirer, but it could not fail to have this effect. At any rate in 1891 the French statisticians no longer felt equal to presenting the annual results in this preposterous form. At this point, therefore, a change was introduced into the form of the budget of the Protectorate of Annam and Tongking. Beginning with the year 1892, the budget was reduced to the resources derived from local revenues alone, the French government having decided to include the military expenditure in the general budget of the "metropolis." Those are the words of the official explanation. For the next two years, therefore, the budgets of Annam and Tongking assume this pleasing shape:—

Budget de	Recettes.	Dépenses.	Excédant des Recettes sur les Dépenses.
	Francs.	Francs.	Francs.
1892	20,820,680	19,385,035	1,435,645
1893	18,531,450	18,040,098	491,352

The results thus became more attractive than ever: the revenues of the colony showing an actual excess over its expenditure. I need hardly point out that in these two years no account whatever is taken in the local budget of the vastly preponderating part of the expenses. To get at the facts, therefore, we must place these budgets from 1887 to 1893 in a different form. The expenditure is obviously both "ordinary"

* "Les ressources extraordinaires proviennent de subventions de la métropole et de la Cochin-Chine, et de remboursements effectués par le Ministre de la Guerre pour les dépenses normales de ses troupes."—"Organisation des Colonies françaises et des Pays de Protectorat," par E. Petit, Paris, 1894, p. 607.

and "extraordinary" added together, while the real and only actual *revenue* is the "ordinary" one. We thus get the following results:—

Budget of	Expenditure.	Revenue.	Deficit.
1887	69,643,670	11,377,104	58,266,566
1888	50,869,342	13,572,132	37,297,210
1889	52,453,160	15,445,626	37,007,534
1890	47,566,813	15,297,415	32,269,398
1891	43,579,801	18,814,721	24,765,080
1892	37,835,035*	20,820,680†	17,014,355
1893	47,490,098*	18,531,450†	28,958,648
		Total deficit	235,578,791frcs.

Instead of the cost of Tongking from 1887 to 1894 being 220,365,000 francs, we find, therefore, that from 1887 to 1893 it reached 235,578,791 francs. The conclusion arrived at above therefore takes the following corrected shape:—

	Francs.
1883–1886	269,802,379
1887–1893	235,578,791
Total	505,381,170

* These totals are arrived at, in the absence of the complete budget for these years, which has been suppressed, by adding together the "dépenses ordinaires," the "subventions" from France and from Cochin-China, and the subsidy for the cable. Theoretically they should be quite accurate, but I am convinced they are under the mark, though I cannot trace any other figures.

† These official figures are obviously based upon the revenues as they were reckoned in 1893 to have been. But in the official *Annuaire de l'Indo-Chine* for 1894 the revenues are revised to be for 1892, 4,792,502 dols., and for 1893, 5,509,543 dols. These sums, multiplied respectively by 4 and by 3·33, the official (though incorrect) rates of exchange into francs, give 19,170,008 and 18,346,778 francs. These are therefore the latest figures. I have, however, adhered to those furnished me officially. As in the case of Singapore (see p. 46), the revenue of Tongking for these years, when given in dollars, shows an increase, and when given in francs a decrease. But it is important to bear in mind that the same injustice does not arise in the French as in the British colony, for all the customs duties of Tongking are collected in francs, and have therefore to be translated into dollars for the purposes of the budget, whereas in Singapore they are alike collected and expressed in dollars. In Tongking, accordingly, every fall in the price of the dollar tends *pro tanto* to inflate the revenue as expressed in terms of silver dollars; in Singapore it makes no difference.

To this must be added the subsidies to Tongking from France and Cochin-China for 1894, namely, 29,150,000 francs—as shown above. The conclusion, therefore, at which I have finally arrived is that from 1883, when the history of Tongking began, down to the latest accessible official statistics, the cost of Tongking to France has reached the colossal figure of 534,531,170 francs, or £21,381,247, a yearly average of 44,544,264 francs, or £1,781,770.* Or, to put the fact in a popular form, the satisfaction of including "le Tonkin" among the possessions of his country *has cost the French taxpayer 122,039 francs—£4,881—a day, Sundays included, for every day that he has had it.* It may safely be foretold that when at length he comes to realise this fact he will be surprised, and his surprise will manifest itself in a striking manner.

So much for the debit side of the account. Let us now compare it as briefly as possible with what Tongking has to show on the other side of the ledger. This is, after all, the point of real importance. It does not matter what France has spent upon Tongking, if she has thereby secured an adequate return in trade. At the present moment, too, the balance-sheet of Tongking is of more interest than ever as an example of French colonisation, since France has just voted 65,000,000 francs to repeat the experiment in Madagascar, under similar conditions of native opposition and problematical results. The following table exhibits the foreign trade of Tongking from 1883 to 1892, inclusive, the figures for 1893 not having yet been published.

* I am aware, for reasons unnecessary to give at length, that a number of items have escaped me. Though I cannot trace them with sufficient uniformity to include them, the following extracts will show I am not wrong in asserting that the above falls short of the actual total:—

"Le budget du service colonial est donc une portion du budget métropolitain, ou budget général de l'État, appliquée aux colonies, mais il ne correspond pas à la totalité des dépenses des services compris dans le budget de l'Etat et executés aux colonies; les dépenses du 'service marine' relèvent, en effet, du budget des dépenses de la marine." "Le budget de la guerre [1893] participe pour 1 million aux dépenses militaires du Tonkin."—"Organisation des Colonies françaises et des Pays de Protectorat," par E. Petit, Paris, 1894, pp. 490 and 531.

FOREIGN TRADE OF TONGKING, 1883-1892.*

	Imports.		Exports.	
	From France and French Colonies.	From Foreign Countries.	To France and French Colonies.	To Foreign Countries.
	Francs.	Francs.	Francs.	Francs.
1883	405,606	2,922,601	649,987	3,440,359
1884	2,015,763	7,126,304	79,483	541,147
1885	3,421,610	14,667,087	49,713	593,287
1886	4,654,829	18,220,173	65,206	605,879
1887	7,328,127	20,824,664	82,175	335,476
1888	6,521,408	17,479,220	164,228	6,586,848
1889	6,574,572	17,170,312	477,444	10,161,564
1890	8,907,688	11,896,984	1,700,052	5,321,564
1891	9,604,491	15,554,409	583,518	11,146,254
1892	9,504,926	18,927,846	420,221	10,315,629

The figures of the above table present the following summarised totals:—

TOTAL FOREIGN TRADE OF TONGKING, 1883-1892.

	France and French Colonies.	Foreign Countries.	Totals.
	Francs.	Francs.	Francs.
Imports from ...	58,939,020	144,789,600	203,728,620
Exports to ...	4,272,027	49,048,007	53,320,034
Totals ...	63,211,047	193,837,607	257,048,654

* The figures for 1883 are taken from "Le Régime Commercial de l'Indo-Chine française," Paris, 1894. Those for the following years from the "Rapport général sur les statistiques des douanes pour 1892," Hanoi, 1893. There is good reason to believe the latter to be inaccurate in the direction of exaggeration, and indeed in one or two cases I have proved them to be so. But after many vain attempts to secure a set of accurate and uniform figures I have been obliged to fall back upon these as they stand. The variations of figures in different French official and semi-official publications would be incredible to any one who has not attempted to reconcile them. In the above table the figures of coasting trade, and the trade between the different members of the Union of French Indo-China, are, of course, not included.

From this it may be seen at a glance what effect the "tarif général" has had upon the development of trade between France and French Colonies on the one hand, and Tongking on the other. This tariff was forced upon Indo-China in spite, as I have already said, of her vehement and unceasing protests, and in defiance of the prophecies of every enlightened French economist. Its intention was, of course, to exclude foreign products from Tongking, and to make of the colony a great market for French domestic and colonial products. Its result has been that French imports were comparatively little more in 1892 than they were in 1887; while foreign imports are more than in 1886 and comparatively little below 1887. And that the total trade between France and her other colonies, and Tongking, has amounted in ten years to the pitiful sum of 63 millions of francs, or £2,520,000; while the total foreign trade during the same time has been nearly 194 millions of francs, or £7,760,000. That is to say, the high protective system has been the most disastrous failure, or, as M. Leroy-Beaulieu says, "the application to Indo-China of a general Customs tariff is a colossal error."

In the debate in the Chamber of Deputies, to which I have already frequently referred, M. Armand Porteu said: "The French Colonies together contain a population of 20 to 24 millions of inhabitants. Now let us see what they cost and what they bring in. Our French Colonies cost us yearly 70 millions of francs: 53 millions inscribed in the colonial budget, 12 millions in the budget of the navy, and 5 millions in the budget of post and telegraphs. . . . Their total commerce is 410 millions per annum. Of that sum the share of France by sale and purchase is 170 millions, and our importations into the Colonies reach only 70 millions. You thus spend 70 millions in order to dispose of 70 millions' worth of goods. That is the result of your Colonial system. I ask you if it is not grievous." From the figures I have here given with reference to one colony, I can leave the statement of M.

Porteu far behind. Excluding the deficit of 1893, namely, 28,958,648 francs, the total cost of this colony to the mother country to 1892 inclusive has been 476,422,522 francs, and the total French trade with it during the same period has only amounted to 63,251,047 francs. Or, to afford a complete parallel to the figures given by M. Porteu, France has spent 476 millions of francs upon Tongking in order to dispose of 59 million francs' worth of French products.*

One final lesson remains to be drawn. Regarded from the ordinary point of view of the political economist, the above figures present the following result:—

	Francs.
Total Imports	203,728,620
Total Exports	53,320,034
Balance of Trade against Tongking ...	150,408,586

A blacker result than this from the conventional point of view could hardly be imagined; but these last figures point another moral even more unmistakable. To quote M. Leroy-Beaulieu again: "We are practising a systematic exploitation of the public funds for the profit of a thousand or so persons. . . . What is needed is the suppression of a Colonial Council which only represents a handful of furnishers and functionaries." That remark hits the last nail upon the head.

As a matter of sober fact, in conclusion, the French colonisation of Tongking—and Tongking is only one example of a truth which every other French colony would illustrate to a greater or less degree—has amounted to this: France has taken possession of a country; she has despatched to it an army of soldiers and a second army of

* This general statement, as I wish to make quite clear, is not an absolutely accurate one, since the details of expenditure given in the above tables refer for the most part to Annam and Tongking, while the figures of trade refer almost exclusively to Tongking alone. But the share of Annam in both cost and returns is of course a very minor factor in comparison with that of Tongking.

functionaries; a handful of dealers has followed to supply these with the necessaries and luxuries of life; the dealers have purchased these necessaries and luxuries from France (the foreign imports being chiefly for native consumption), as the Customs tariff prevents them from buying cheaper elsewhere; these purchases have practically constituted the trade of France with the Colony. *Castra faciunt; coloniam appellant.*

RUSSIA IN THE FAR EAST.

CHAPTER VIII.

VLADIVOSTOK: "THE POSSESSION OF THE EAST."

THE Russian Government and the geographical situation of Russian Tartary have succeeded between them in keeping their Pacific stronghold well out of the world, and ten thousand miles nearer to it in body bring you little or no nearer to it in knowledge. "Going to Vladivostok? Dear me!" people said just as naturally at Nagasaki, a hundred yards from the vessel which was getting up steam to go there, as they did in London on the other side of the world. But the journey is easy enough to make. From Yokohama the magnificent steamers of the great Japanese steamship line, the Nippon Yusen Kaisha, take you southward along the coast to Kobe, the pleasantest foreign settlement in Japan; then to Shimonoseki, famous for its foreign bombardment in 1865, and now strongly and skilfully fortified with coast batteries of the latest design, armed with heavy howitzers of Japanese manufacture—most efficient weapons; then through the Inland Sea, ranking high among the "show scenery" of the East, and drop you at Nagasaki. From Yokohama to Nagasaki is 692 miles; from Nagasaki to Vladivostok is 659 more. At noon next day the *Takachiho* steams out into the Korean Straits; during the night she passes Port Hamilton a long way off, those bare islands of which the world talked for a year, and about which, too, opinions are as divided in the East as at home, the truth probably being that England did very well to give them up, since they would have been quite untenable in the event of a bombardment; and on the follow-

ing afternoon she drops anchor at Fusan, the treaty port and Japanese settlement on the south coast of Korea. Then came a revelation of head-gear among the white-robed Koreans, a chat with the Commissioner of Customs, and an afternoon with a hammerless companion, resulting in three brace of pheasants, a snipe, and a small deer; and off again. For twenty-four hours we steamed along a rocky, desolate, and forbidding coast, and next morning the anchor dropped again in the splendid harbour of Wönsan (Gensan), the western Treaty Port, alongside the big white French ironclad, the flagship *Turenne*. Soon a smart petty officer came up the gangway bearing a courteous invitation to Captain Walker and myself to dine with "M. le Contre-Amiral Layrle, commandant en chef la division navale de l'extrême Orient," and that night on board the *Turenne* a dozen merry guests, all very far from home, the flashing of many wax candles over silver plate and glittering glass, the skill of a decorated French cook, the witchery of old Burgundy, and the strains of Offenbach and Suppé, all combined to dispel the thought that we were lying off the uninhabited Port Lazareff, in the wild and lonely seas of the Hermit Kingdom. But at midnight our anchor was heaved again, and at daylight next day but one the helm was suddenly put over to starboard opposite a break in the high wall of cliffs, the man in the chains took up his monotonous cry, and we swept round into the harbour of Vladivostok—the proudly-named "Possession of the East."

An old-fashioned theologian would say that Providence had intended this place to be made impregnable. The harbour is shaped, speaking roughly, like the Greek capital Γ. It has two entrances, one at the south-east corner, the other in the middle of the west side, both narrow deep-water channels, the latter, indeed, being only a few hundred feet wide. The Eastern entrance is the one used for traffic, the other being dangerous on account of currents and sandbanks. As you steam straight north up the long leg of the Γ, you notice first an ex-

tensive beach on the right, then several large bays open out in succession, and you pass through a narrow opening between Capes Novosilsky and Nazimoff, and leave the western entrance on the left. The hills around are densely wooded, and all the defences visible so far have been extensive earthworks building on your right, and loads of bricks for them lying on the shores below. Now, however, as the ship passes Cape Goldobin you discover a large two-storied battery from which six black muzzles look down. What may be behind the earthworks of the upper storey you cannot tell, but the guns below are visibly 6-inch breech-loaders. They constitute only an inner line of defence for the interior of the harbour, but they would, of course, make it very hot for a ship in the harbour with their plunging fire at short range, but Vladivostok is defended by altogether different weapons, however dreadful these may look to the captain of peaceful merchant vessels. Soon after passing Fort Goldobin, a sharp turn to the right, almost at a right angle, brings you into the harbour, which then stretches out due east in a straight line, upwards of two miles long and half a mile wide. This is the Eastern Bosphorus, and the "Golden Horn" of the Pacific.

The town of Vladivostok extends nearly the entire length of the north side of the harbour, and in configuration it rather resembles St. John's, Newfoundland, the houses beginning at the water's edge and gradually thinning out as the hills behind get steeper. They are of all sorts, from the log-cabin and Chinese shanty to the neat wooden cottage in its little garden and the handsome brick business house of several storeys. Over all rises the cathedral—the one thing in Vladivostok that remains unfinished for want of money. The anchorage is so admirable that the *Takachiho* (now, alas! at the bottom of the sea, off Tsushima), a vessel 327 feet long, lies within a stone's throw of the wharves, and the same anchorage exists all round. Directly in front are three little parallel streets constituting the Chinese bazaar. On the west is the Chinese

and Korean town of wooden shanties; behind are five or six blocks of fine brick buildings forming the winter barracks, while straight away ahead is a broad street soon disappearing over the dusty hill, to become two miles away the great Siberian post-road. The main street runs parallel with the harbour, and on this are the chief stores and many of the private houses. A quarter of a mile along it to the east is the Governor's residence, buried in a square mass of foliage—the gardens where a first-rate band plays regularly and the society of Vladivostok comes to walk and to gossip. Further on, always between the water and the street, is the "Staff," the Governor's official head-quarters, a large handsome building, and further still, a mile or more from where we lie, a tall chimney marks the situation of the "Port," as the Russians call it, a score or more of storehouses and machine shops forming the Navy Yard or Arsenal. This extends along the shore for a quarter of a mile, and the torpedo boats and small ships of the Siberian Squadron lie alongside, with a confiscated American fishing-sloop, while the ironclads and gunboats are anchored a little further off. On the opposite shore of the harbour there are no buildings of any kind, except an iron storehouse deep in the woods here and there, isolated presumably on account of inflammable or explosive contents. On the summits of the two high hills behind the town are two stations for the fire-watch.

The streets of Vladivostok are gay enough. Civilian costume is the exception, almost every figure being either a soldier or a Chinaman. The rank and file have none of the smartness of European troops. Their uniforms are rough and simple —white blouse and cap, long black boots and belt—they are evidently expected to last a long time, and their wearers do a lot of hard manual work. If not exactly dirty, therefore, the soldiers look very unkempt. The officers also, and their clothes, have the hardened appearance of active service, but their flowing cloaks make them picturesque. Blue and white Chinamen, sombre-suited Japanese, and shrouded Koreans,

VLADIVOSTOK.

with marvellous hats of cardboard and bamboo fibre, variegate the scene. An element of picturesqueness and noise is added by the droschky-drivers in their long scarlet blouses and black "zouave" waistcoats, their long unpolished boots, and their flowing hair. They congregate at the corners, and dash up and down the main street at a gallop, their whips cracking like pistol-shots.

The chief hotel of Vladivostok is at a pastrycook's shop, so I remained in my comfortable quarters on board, and after breakfast I went on shore to present my semi-official introduction—an imposing-looking document, a foot square, with the Russian Eagle on the back—to the Military Governor, Rear-Admiral Ermolaiew. His Excellency received me with the utmost courtesy, but his efforts to conceal his vast surprise at my visit were in vain. He read the letter—a long one—then he looked at me; then he read it again and looked again. "Yes," he said, finally, "anything I can do for you, of course, but what on earth do you want to see at Vladivostok?" I modestly replied that, with His Excellency's permission, I wanted to see everything. "But what?" As I had only been an hour in the place, however, I was not in a position to specify my desires in detail. "But what shall I do?" To dictate to a Russian Military Governor was naturally repugnant to me, and as Admiral Ermolaiew's French—the only language in which we could communicate—was of a rudimentary character, the conversation was rapidly approaching an embarrassing dead-lock. Suddenly, with an explosive "Ah!" the Governor sprang from his chair and disappeared, returning in a minute with his wife, a most attractive and energetic lady, charming even at that early hour of the morning. Madame Ermolaiew spoke French perfectly: with the native tact of a Russian she straightened matters in a moment, and five minutes later I was bowed out between the salutes of a bluejacket and a sentry, with the Governor's card in my pocket bearing a written permission to go almost anywhere and see almost anything,

and with an appointment to meet an officer the next morning at eleven, who would act as *cicerone*. I was slightly out of breath, it is true, at the speed of the interview, but naturally very grateful for the distinguished courtesy.

Vladivostok is a purely military town — technically, a "fortress." That is, not only does it owe its existence to strategic and military considerations, but even after it has been thus created no other interests or enterprises have grown up around it. In this case trade has not followed the flag: the place is just Russia's one stronghold and naval base on the Pacific, and nothing else. Its imports consist of the supplies for the military and naval population and those who minister to them; its only export at present is a little seaweed. Two other industries might be developed here, however, and these are well worth the attention of energetic men with some capital. Siberia contains vast forests of the finest and largest timber, and a very important export trade in this could easily be cultivated. And the authorities find great difficulty in supplying themselves with fresh meat. Cattle are imported regularly from Korea, but the supply is poor and uncertain, while Siberia is probably as well suited in many parts for cattle-raising as Western Canada. I believe, moreover, that the Russian authorities would materially help the right man to introduce this. At present, however, all its commerce is a tribute to the God of Battles. A Russian store has just closed, and the two great stores, magnificent stone and brick buildings, employing scores of clerks and salesmen, where you can buy absolutely everything, from a pound of butter to a piano—are owned by Germans, the one by Messrs. Kunst and Albers, the other by Mr. Langelütje. There is also the smaller general store of Mr. Hagemann, almost the only English resident. The population of the place when I was there was about 15,000, of whom 5,000 were Chinese, 2,000 Russian civilians, and 6,000 troops and bluejackets ashore. But the strength of the troops has no doubt been considerably raised lately.

The Chinese and Koreans are under very strict regulations, being only allowed to reside in their own quarter, and any found in the street after nine o'clock at night are arrested and locked up. This was found necessary to prevent disturbance. The Koreans, I should add, have an intense hatred for the Russians, due largely, no doubt, to the harshness with which they are treated. There are large numbers of them in the immediate neighbourhood, and they are always in a state of discontent bordering upon revolt. Whenever they can get hold of a Russian by himself, they are very apt to murder him out of hand. Of course, their power is but that of the mosquito on the elephant, but if Russia were engaged in hostilities they might well prove an annoying thorn in her side. Probably 2,000 Chinese labourers are employed in the arsenal alone, and they fill the streets when they come streaming out from work, and all the harbour-front population, boatmen, cargo-handlers, &c., are Chinese or Koreans. The stores employ many Chinese; they are patrolled all night by Chinese watchmen, and the only domestic servants are Chinamen or Japanese women. Many of the Chinese come in the spring, when the harbour opens, and leave again, mostly for Chefoo, in the late autumn when it closes. There has been some talk about putting a prohibitory tax upon poor John Chinaman here too, but it will come to nothing; he is indispensable.

Life in this corner of Russian Tartary is lively enough, especially in winter. Communication with the outside world is easy by mail and telegraph. Letters come by sea (very few go overland) from San Francisco in four weeks, and telegrams to European Russia are ridiculously cheap. During the summer there are the constant festivities attending the arrival of foreign men-of-war. All the Russian officers, too, are fond of society, and there is a first-rate band. In winter it is of course dreadfully cold, and a frozen stick of milk is left at the door in the morning, and the beef is kept frozen in a tub, and chopped out as wanted. But from Christmas onwards for

a couple of months there is a ceaseless round of social gaiety. Excellent pheasant and duck-shooting is to be had over the surrounding bays and hills, and large deer abound in an island a day's sail to the south. This, however, is strictly preserved as an Imperial reserve, and Russian game-keepers are stationed there, and periodically murdered by Korean marauders. The famous thick-coated Northern tigers are sometimes to be found by seeking. One of the traditions of Vladivostok, and a true one, too, tells how a young fellow named Chudjakow was out shooting one day, when a tiger met him. He fired and killed it. Scarcely had it fallen, however, when a second walked out of the woods. He fired again, hitting this one, which turned tail and disappeared. A moment later a tiger appeared again from the same place. He fired for the third time, supposing this to be the same animal, and wounded it slightly. Before he could reload, however, it was upon him, and he was fighting it for his life. His rifle was useless, and he had only a long hunting-knife. As he did not return at night his father and friends organised a search-party, and at last found him unconscious between the paws of the dead tiger. A little way off lay the body of the first, and just inside the wood they found the second, which had died of its wounds. The days are gone by when the houses at Vladivostok were barricaded against the great cats, which used to come into the back yards at night to revel in the family slops put for them, and when men did not venture out after dark except five or six together, all armed; but I have seen one of the tigers thus shot by Chudjakow, and a photograph of the young man himself and the three skins.

Everything in Vladivostok is made subservient to military interests, and there is no pretence to the contrary. As is the case in all "fortresses" no civil rights exist, and the merchants can be required to leave at twenty-four hours' notice, without any explanation being given. The Mayor is merely the vehicle of the Governor's will. The neighbourhood

of every fortified point is strictly guarded by sentries, whom no civilian ever passes. The local weekly newspaper, the *Vladivostok*, with a circulation of 450 copies, is edited (excellently so far as geographical, ethnological, and other non-contentious information is concerned) by a member of the Staff, and the Governor himself is the Censor. In return for this, however, it receives an official subsidy of 2,000 roubles a year. The police, who are supposed to know everything that passes and the movements of every one, resident or stranger, are of course the Governor's pawns, under the command of a military officer. No foreign consuls are allowed to reside at Vladivostok, the only foreign representative being a Japanese called Commissioner of Trade, or some such non-political title. Most foreign newspapers and books are forbidden, as in European Russia, and at the only bookseller's in town I could not buy a single volume in any foreign language, except a few French works of world-famous innocence, used everywhere as school reading-books; and inquisitiveness or gossip on the part of the foreign population about local naval or military affairs is sternly discouraged, and trespassers against this unwritten law soon learn very distinctly that they will be more comfortable if they obey it. I ran up against this before I had been in Vladivostok four hours. My first day there I was lunching at a foreign house, and happened, naturally and quite innocently, to put some question or other about the batteries. "That is a matter," I was immediately told by my host, "that we make a point of knowing nothing about. We find that ignorance on such subjects is the only way to get along pleasantly with our Russian friends. Besides, it is none of our business, any way. We are here as traders, not as possible combatants." So I put no more questions of that kind. The regulations against publicity have recently been made much more severe. It is now forbidden to ascend the neighbouring hills, and patrol parties are frequently sent to scour the surrounding country, their orders being to deal promptly with any investigator.

The many Russian officers that I met and talked with, told me of course just as little as they liked, and the sources of information were therefore distressingly conspicuous by their absence. I must add, however, that the authorities put no ridiculous restrictions or professions of violent secrecy in my way. I was immediately told that I could not inspect the batteries or fortifications from within—a permission I should never have dreamed of asking; but several places where no Englishman had ever been before—the whole of the Navy Yard and Arsenal, for instance—were thrown open to me; the Governor's card took me almost everywhere; I had a written permission to take photographs, with certain specified exceptions —a permission unfortunately nullified to a great extent by rain; I was immediately introduced at the Naval Club; and finally the Governor's Adjutant lent me his own boat. As I thus sped across the harbour of this Russian stronghold, in a Russian official's barge, pulled by six lusty Russian blue-jackets, with a Russian rear-admiral's flag trailing behind me, it struck me as a decidedly unique position for an English journalist, and as an interesting commentary upon the suspicion and unfriendliness that are so freely attributed to the Russians in some quarters.

CHAPTER IX.

THE POSITION OF RUSSIA ON THE PACIFIC.

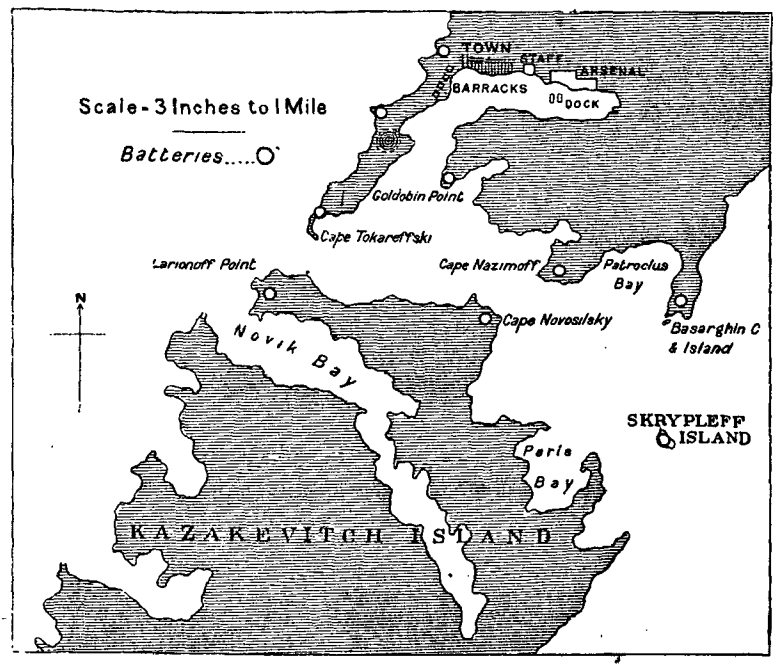
VLADIVOSTOK is of great interest to the rest of the civilised world, and chiefly, of course, to England, the United States, and Japan, as the Powers with most at stake in the Pacific, for exactly the same reasons that it is of importance to Russia, namely, as the one great naval stronghold and base from which Russian ironclads could issue in time of war to fall upon their enemies in the Pacific, and to which they could return for supplies, for repairs, or for refuge. Is it a great stronghold? Could it defy a hostile fleet? Is it provided with the necessaries of an efficient naval base? Does it, as its name declares, confer upon those who hold it "the possession of the East"?

The last so-called "scare" showed exactly what would be done at Vladivostok in case of war. The lights on Skrypleff Island in the east entrance and near Pospaloff Point to guide ships through the west entrance were extinguished; the west entrance was completely blocked from Larioneff Point to Cape Tokareffski with contact mines (one of these got adrift and blew up a Russian fishing-vessel some time afterwards); the narrow passage from Cape Novosilsky to Cape Nazimoff was blocked with contact and electric mines, except a channel fifty feet wide under the former, and a gunboat lay near by to stop merchant vessels and send an officer on board to pilot them through; while preparations were made to remove all the civilian inhabitants to a sheltered valley some distance

inland. Supposing now that these precautions were all carried out to-day, could a fairly powerful fleet reduce the place? We will say for the sake of argument, to begin with, that the Russian fleet is out of the way. Until a few years ago, what were the defences of Vladivostok? The inner ends of both channels were commanded and their mine-fields protected by Fort Goldobin, and this was armed with a number of 6-inch breechloading guns of Russian manufacture. Its upper part was only, I believe, a battery of mortars. In the centre of the long narrow strip of land forming the western side of the harbour were two powerful batteries, each containing, I believe, two breechloading Krupp guns, probably about 27-ton guns, throwing a shell of 516 lb., and these were the heaviest guns with which Vladivostok was armed. Further to the north was another battery, formed, I believe, of two 8-inch breechloading cannon, two more of the same Krupps, and four rifled mortars. These two batteries are designed to protect the weak point of Vladivostok—the shelling of the town and arsenal over the land. That was all. The answer was therefore easy. Vladivostok, in the absence of men-of-war to protect it, could undoubtedly have been taken, and if the last "scare" had become a struggle, there can be little doubt that the British fleet would have first shelled the town and then forced an entrance to the harbour. For the town could have been shelled easily at 8,000 yards, while the bombarding ships constantly moving would present a poor target for the Krupp guns at nearly 4,000 yards; the men fighting the inner forts would have been terribly exposed; while removing or exploding mines which are not well protected by batteries is a comparatively easy matter nowadays. If defending ships had been present they would have added to the difficulty by exactly their own strength. But after an attack made a few years ago, Vladivostok would certainly not be the "possession of the East"—it would be the possession of the enemy.

The truth of the foregoing assertion can be almost proved, as

you prove a sum in division by another in multiplication, by the fact, hardly yet appreciated, that the Russian Government has been adding to the defences of Vladivostok in every respect and on the most lavish scale. An estimate was passed by the



THE HARBOUR OF VLADIVOSTOK.*

Governor-General of Eastern Siberia, and submitted to St. Petersburg for approval, for strengthening Vladivostok by engineering work alone at an expense of no less than 6,000,000 roubles. The Arsenal is being greatly enlarged by both new

* It should hardly be necessary to explain that I do not present this sketch-map as anything even remotely resembling a map for naval or military purposes. It is merely a reduction from the Admiralty chart, with such additions as are of general interest and my eyes and information enabled me to add. Nor is my account of the place intended to serve naval or military ends in the slightest degree. The British authorities, at any rate, as is well known by experts, stand in no need of information about Vladivostok. They have plenty of it from a very different source.

buildings and new machinery; an addition to the great floating Stanfield dock is just finishing; all along the harbour side of the west arm are rows of fine new barracks; and several new forts were already half finished when I was there, of a size and arrangement far in advance of anything existing previously. One of these forts, just to the north of Cape Tokareffski, will command both entrances to the harbour and ships in position to shell the town; another of great size will command the mine-field with which Novik Bay, from which Fort Goldobin and part of the town could be bombarded, is to be protected; and two or three others, including one on Skrypleff Island, will command the harbour and its approaches from the east. It is only reasonable to suppose that these, which should all be complete by this time, are armed with guns of the latest pattern and great power. If the Government sanctions the engineers' estimate recently submitted, batteries will also be placed on some of the large islands south of the harbour, an extremely important situation. By this time, therefore, it is not too much to say that Vladivostok is impregnable from the sea. The Russians admit that the Chinese town can always be destroyed from the sea, but I believe they estimate that they can burn this and rebuild it for 24,000 roubles. They deny, however, that the town proper and the Arsenal are open to shell fire from beyond the west batteries, but I cannot agree to this, as with my field-glass I have distinctly seen the church over the southernmost of the two west land batteries, within bombarding distance. This, however, is of comparatively small moment, for all war stores would of course be removed to a place of perfect security, and Vladivostok would be little weaker as a naval stronghold after the town had been destroyed than before. Moreover, it is an accepted military and naval maxim that under modern conditions ships stand practically no chance whatever against well-equipped and well-handled coast batteries, and that it is little short of suicidal for a fleet to attempt to reduce a fortress

by bombardment alone. In case of war an enemy would probably try to find the Russian Fleet and blockade it somewhere, for if the ships were once destroyed or captured, Vladivostok would cease to be worth attacking. It should be clear, however, from the foregoing, that the Russian authorities are determined on no half measures. They have got Vladivostok and they mean to keep it, and it is doubtful if there is at present any army and fleet in the whole East strong enough even to try to take it away from them.

The new restrictive regulations so much discussed and so severely criticised in naval circles, by which only two ships of any foreign fleet are allowed to anchor in Vladivostok Harbour at one time, were officially stated to have been made in accordance with similar regulations by other Powers. But they were really the result of one particular incident. On August 21, 1886, the British squadron on its summer cruise north reached Vladivostok while all the Russian vessels happened to be away, and our eight ships entered in a thick fog, and were not discovered by the Russians on shore until they were dropping anchor in faultless order in the inner harbour. It was a most brilliant piece of seamanship—the Russians themselves would never have attempted it—but it was surely most indiscreet, as the consequences soon showed. For naturally enough the Russian authorities were thrown into a panic, and said to themselves that an enemy might do this very thing a short time before war was suddenly declared, when Russia on the Pacific would be at his mercy. Therefore, rather than risk multiplying unpleasantness by prohibiting the entry of foreign vessels from time to time as circumstances might seem to require, they decided to cut off the danger once for all. It was natural and explicable enough on the part of the Russians, but it is an innovation far from welcome to the greater part of any foreign fleet, which must remain knocking about outside at gun practice or steam tactics, while the flagship and one other vessel are comfortably anchored and politely entertained within. The

Russians, by the way, do not seem to navigate their own waters very well, for a gunboat had gone aground near Vladivostok just before my visit; a foreign merchant-captain told me that he had once steamed after two other gunboats on the coast to warn them they were running into shallow water; and the *Vitiaz* was totally lost a short time ago and actually in Port Lazareff —the very harbour which Russia is supposed to have selected for her base on the Korean coast.

The impression made by the rank and file of the land forces at Vladivostok is that of soldiers who have been on active service for six months, long enough to have grown careless about the polishing of leather and steel and the details of personal care which go to make up the much admired "smartness" of crack regiments. Their clothes are solid and coarse, their boots are unblacked, and their weapons look as if they had seen several campaigns. The men themselves are hardy enough, but they appear to be extremely poor and far from happy. It is certainly very astonishing to see soldiers in uniform hawking wild flowers at street-corners, as I did in Vladivostok itself. They are mostly much younger than troops with us, and they are evidently drawn from the lower classes of a farming population. Their winter barracks are spacious and handsome buildings, but their summer barracks, several miles inland by the shore of a beautiful part of the Amur Bay, are rather ramshackle, and if the truth is to be told, much dirtier than Tommy Atkins would be satisfied to live in. But I spent a jolly evening with them when I rode out with my military guide, and shared their palatable if frugal supper of black bread, potato soup, and *kvass*—a kind of thin bitter beer. The detachment I visited was under the command of a lieutenant who looked fifteen, and was certainly not twenty. They would make good rough fighting material—*Kanonenfutter* as the Germans cynically call it—all the better for war work in this far-off hard country because they do not know what it is to be petted or pampered in time of peace. In

fact, peace means perhaps more hard work for them than war, for they are employed on building fortifications, making bricks, and several other occupations that are not included in the military curriculum elsewhere, very much like common labourers. The following estimate of their numbers at Vladivostok is not far from the mark: two battalions of infantry, 2,000; artillery, 350; sappers, 250; total, on peace footing, 2,600 men. This is doubtless much smaller than is generally supposed, but the tendency is to distribute the forces all over this part of Eastern Siberia, and only to collect a large number at Vladivostok in times of danger. Probably 30,000 men could be concentrated here in a short time.

The officers, on the whole, struck me as a fine body of men, dignified, devoted, and intelligent. But they must suffer intellectually from being cut off by the strict Russian censorship laws from the information which circulates so freely elsewhere. The growing importance, by the way, of this stronghold in Russian Tartary, is shown by the fact that officers are no longer liberally pensioned for short service here and elsewhere on the Siberian coast. Officers used to elect to serve in Siberia, and after ten years' service were entitled to retire upon half-pay, and after twenty years' service upon full-pay. For service in European Russia, on the other hand, retirement upon full-pay comes only after thirty-five years' service. Full-pay in Russia, however, does not mean the same as elsewhere. A Russian officer's total military income is made up of three parts, pay proper, lodging allowance, and table-money, in the proportion that a total income of say over 3,000 roubles a year, a lieutenant's pay, would mean only 1,400 roubles of pay proper. Half-pay for him, therefore, after ten years in Siberia would be 700 roubles, and full pay 1,400 roubles. These liberal terms of pension naturally made service in Siberia popular, but the whole system of naval pension was altered a year ago, and the above only applies now to officers who entered the navy before 1887. An occasional officer there speaks a little English,

several speak French, and almost all speak more or less German. To Lieutenant Vladimir Maximoff, "flag-officer to the Commander of the port," in whose charge I was placed, and who combined the maximum of courtesy and hospitality with an irreducible minimum of information, I owe very hearty thanks. As for the naval and military hospitality of Vladivostok, it was generous and constant, and as everybody was familiar with the *Biercomment* of German student-life, it was also both formal and hilarious.

I made one peculiarly interesting discovery. It is universally believed that Vladivostok is a closed port for four months out of the twelve—isolated by impassable ice from about December 17th to April 17th. And this is regarded as the sole explanation of Russia's *Drang nach Süden*, her necessity to press gradually southward for an open port in Korea or below it. Such is not the case. A man-of-war — and therefore a dozen—can be got in or out of Vladivostok Harbour in case of urgent need at any time of year. There is an American ice-breaking machine, which on a trial trip broke a channel through the thickest part of the ice, one hundred feet long and six fathoms wide, at a pace which would take it out beyond Goldobin Point, where the ice is naturally more or less broken, in three or four days. Moreover Patroclus Bay, and especially the bay further to the south-east, are practicable bays all the year round. At any rate two American ships came up there unaided a few winters ago. Indeed the authorities are considering whether they will not make this the mercantile terminus of the railway.

In conclusion, I may add that the Amur peninsula is fine wooded country for at least thirty miles, with small rivers running east and west, and one or two good roads. The west side presents to the eye a succession of sandy beaches, whilst the east side ends abruptly for the most part in precipitous cliffs.

CHAPTER X.

THE TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY AND ITS RESULTS.

IN the relations of Russia and the Far East, one matter far outweighs in importance all others put together—the Trans-Siberian Railway. It is my conviction that this colossal enterprise is destined to alter the map of that part of the world at no very distant date. To Englishmen it is therefore of the first interest, for if I am right they will shortly be called upon to decide one point of the utmost moment in connection with it.

The absorption of "Siberia"—that is, the whole of Russia's Asiatic possessions with the exception of Transcaucasia, the Transcaspian territory, and Turkestan—occupying an area of not far from 5,000,000 square miles, has proceeded, now quickly, now slowly, but without interruption, ever since the traders of Novgorod began to raid the Finnish Yugra tribe in the twelfth century, for the valuable furs they secured. For centuries the conquest proceeded, through the efforts of hunters and fishermen, the ransackers of mounds, and the mere raiders, their advances being gradually recognised from time to time by the Government. After a while, expedition after expedition added huge territories in a more formal manner. An important date is 1581, when Yermak, a Don Cossack, entering the service of the immensely wealthy Stroganov family, who ruled and practically owned the Ural district, defeated the Tartar Khan, Kuchum, and sent his lieutenant, loaded with furs, back to Moscow to "humbly salute the

Lord Ivan Vaselivich the Terrible, with the acquisition of a new Siberian Kingdom." Slowly but surely Russian settlers and soldiers pressed eastwards, and the eighteenth century was distinguished by a number of remarkable exploring expeditions. One by one, every territory was absorbed, the final great achievement, the annexation of the whole Amur district, coming in 1854. All the territory on the American Continent was ceded to the United States in 1867, and the Kurile Islands were exchanged with Japan for Sakhalin in 1875. At that date Siberia practically took its present shape.

It is an interesting fact that the first person to lay before the Russian Government a proposal for the Trans-Siberian railway was an Englishman. He was an engineer named Dull, and his plan was to construct a tramway, on which horses should supply the motive power, from Nishni-Novgorod, through Kazan and Perm to one of the Siberian ports. It is not surprising that the Russian Government passed over in silence so fantastic a scheme, unsupported by any estimates. Simultaneously with this proposal, Count Mouraviev, afterwards Governor-General of Siberia, proposed to unite De Castries Bay in the Tartar Straits with Sofiisk on the Amur by a carriage road which could be afterwards converted into a railway.* The surveys for this road were actually made in 1857, but nothing came of the proposal. In the same year an American named Collins petitioned the Government for a concession to found a company to unite Irkutsk and Chita. Next, three more Englishmen, Messrs. Morrison, Horn, and Sleigh offered to build a railway from Moscow to the Pacific shore of Siberia, but asked for such privileges in connection with it, as in the opinion of the Russian Government would have led to the concentration of the whole trade of Siberia in the hands of foreigners for a long period. In the same year, 1858, a Russian named Sofronov proposed a line

* Most of the facts here given are taken from a volume published last year by the Russian Department of Trade and Manufactures. I have also drawn slightly from an interesting article by Mr. Frederic Hobart, in the *Engineering Magazine* for June, 1893.

through the Kirghiz steppes to Peking, and four years later another Russian named Kokorev conceived the idea (based upon the schemes of a Government mining official named Rashet) of uniting the basins of the Volga and the Obi. His scheme, however, although favourably received, was soon afterwards abandoned for that of Colonel Bogdanovich, who was despatched in 1866 to inquire into the famine of two years before. He sent the following telegram to the Minister of the Interior: "After removing all difficulties in the provisioning of the governments of Perm and Viatka, and investigating the local conditions, I am of opinion that the only sure means of preventing famine in the Ural country in the future, is the building of a railway from the governments of the interior to Ekaterinburg and thence to Tiumen. Such a line, being subsequently continued through Siberia to the Chinese frontier, would acquire a great importance both strategical and for international trade." Two years later many surveys were carried out in connection with this plan. A third scheme starting, like the two previous ones, from Perm, but ending near Kurgan on the river Tobol, was planned by a trader named Liubimov in 1869. These three schemes were carefully investigated, and it was decided to build a line 463 miles long to join Kama and the Tobol. A Special Commission decided that it was impossible to make the line serve as a link in the chain of the great Siberian railway of the future without sacrificing the mining interests of the Ural district. The idea of the through route was therefore relegated to the future. Surveys, however, continued, and in 1875 it was at length decided to build the first section of a line to approach the Pacific from Nishni-Novgorod, but *viâ* Kazan and Ekaterinburg to Tiumen. In 1878, the Ural railway was opened, and two years later the Imperial order was given to continue it to Tiumen.

For some time afterwards preference was given to the plan of crossing Siberia by a route which should utilise the vast stretches of water-communication, joining these by means of railways.

The obvious advantage of this scheme was the enormous saving of cost. In detail it was to proceed from Tiumen, by the Tura, Tobol, Irtish and Obi rivers, to Tomsk; then by rail to Irkutsk; thence by the Angara river, and across Lake Baikal; thence by rail to the head of the Amur and down it for 1,600 miles; thence by rail to Vladivostok. One fatal objection caused the abandonment of this scheme—namely, that in winter the eleven hundred miles of railway from Tomsk to Irkutsk would be isolated, for it would begin at one frozen river and end at another. Therefore, after much discussion, and in spite of the greatly increased cost, an all-rail line was decided upon in 1891 at the instigation of the Tsar himself. The railway from Samara to Cheliabinsk had been completed in the meantime, and the Siberian railway was to begin at the latter place. On May 17, 1891, the Tsarevich, being at Vladivostok at the conclusion of his tour in the Far East, formally announced by the will of the Tsar that the Grand Siberian Railway should be built, and inaugurated the Usuri section. To take charge of the enterprise the "Siberian Railway Committee" was formed at St. Petersburg, and the Tsarevich appointed president.

The entire railway is divided into seven sections. First, the Western Siberian Section, from Cheliabinsk to the river Obi, an easy section, through an agricultural country, ending at Pochitanka, whence a branch line of 82 miles will connect it with Tomsk; 1,328 versts, at an estimated cost of 47,361,479 roubles. Second, the Central Siberian Section, from Obi to Irkutsk, a difficult and tortuous section, through a mountainous and mineral country and across many rivers; 1,754 versts, at a cost of 73,272,898 roubles. Third, the Baikal Circuit, round the southern end of the "Lake of Death," from Irkutsk to Mysovsk pier, the shortest and most difficult section, with the heaviest grades and the sharpest curves, and a tunnel 12,500 feet long at the height of 770 feet above the lake; 292 versts, at a cost of 22,310,820 roubles, which is likely to be much exceeded. Fourth, the Trans-Baikal Section, from Mysovsk to Stretensk, the most

rich in minerals and containing the highest point of the whole line, the Shoidak Pass, 3,700 feet; 1,009 versts, at a cost of 53,309,817 roubles. Fifth, the Amur Section, from Stretensk to Khabarovka, the longest, easiest, and most promising section, through the "Garden of Siberia," the valleys being fertile and well-watered, and abounding in timber, and the climate milder than elsewhere; 2,000 versts, at a cost of 117,555,835 roubles. Sixth, the North Usuri Section, from Khabarovka to Grafsk, 347 versts, cost 18,738,682 roubles. Seventh, the South Usuri Section, from Grafsk to Vladivostok, along the valley of the Usuri, through coal-bearing and mineral country; 382 versts, cost 17,661,051 roubles. Total length, 7,112 versts; total estimated cost, 350,210,482 roubles. The Grand Siberian Railway may therefore be thus summarised:—

	Section.	Route.	Miles.	Cost.
				£
1	Western Siberian	Cheliabinsk—Obi	880	5,120,159
2	Central Siberian	Obi—Irkutsk	1,162	7,921,394
3	Baikal Circuit	Irkutsk—Mysovsk	193	2,411,980
4	Trans-Baikal	Mysovsk—Stretensk	668	5,763,223
5	Amur	Stretensk—Khabarovka	1,325	12,708,738
6	North Usuri	Khabarovka—Grafsk	229	2,025,803
7	South Usuri	Grafsk—Vladivostok	253	1,909,302
		Total...	4,713	£37,860,592*

According to the latest news, progress is being made on all the sections. From Vladivostok to Spasskoye 150 miles of railway have been open to traffic since last June, and 41 miles from Grafsk station are ready. The second telegraph line is ready for a distance of 30 miles, and 36 station-houses and other buildings have been erected. Between Cheliabinsk and Omsk 6½ miles of line are ready, and 116 station-houses and buildings completed. Nearly 9,650 tons of rails have been supplied, 270,000 sleepers, 587 tons of fastenings, 190 tons of water-pipes, and two reservoirs. The survey has been

* The discrepancies in the additions are due to the fact that the decimals are omitted from the separate items. Exchange: £10=92½ roubles.

completed between Omsk and the Obi for 94 miles, and over 21,000 cubic fathoms of earthworks have been made. On the Central Section between the Obi and Krassnoyarsk much forest has been cut down, 25,000 cubic fathoms of earthworks made, and five stations built. The manufacturers have supplied 260 tons of iron for the bridge across the Tom, 2,200 tons of rails and 700 tons of fastenings, 200,000 sleepers have been laid, and 6,000 telegraph poles erected. Thirteen miles of the line and 25 of the telegraph are ready.* All this amounts, of course, to but a small fraction of the whole, but it shows that the work is actively proceeding. The great trial of strength will not come until the line is finished and the Russian government is face to face with the financial problem of maintaining it and the army of men it will require.

It is likely enough that the Siberian Railway may not be finished either for the money or by the date calculated upon, which is 1904. Nothing, however, unless the Russian Empire should be plunged into war, will prevent its completion early in the next century. When Moscow and the Pacific are in railway connection, and to some extent even before that, the effect upon Russia's domestic and foreign relations must be enormous. The vast extent of Siberia thus opened up, its agricultural possibilities, its mineral certainties, the great variety of its other natural products, and the opportunities it will offer to colonisation, will inaugurate a new epoch in the history of Russia. But the rest of the world is more concerned with the alteration it will bring into the relations of Russia with other countries. This will be startling. The railway will not be built as a commercial, but as a political enterprise. It will not pay its expenses for a long time to come, and the through traffic will be insignificant for a century. Portions of it will soon be paying for themselves, but as a whole the Siberian Railway is to be regarded as a long step forward politically. The interesting question therefore is, in what direction? The Transcaspian Railway is at Samarcand,

* *The Times*, October 19, 1894, Vienna correspondence.

and will soon be at Tashkend and Khokand, approaching the western frontier of China. The Siberian Railway skirts the northern and eastern frontiers of China practically from Irkutsk all the way to Vladivostok. A branch line will at once be built along the Selenga river, 75 miles, from Verkhne-Udinsk to Kiakhta, thus securing the whole Russo-Chinese trade at once. Before long, therefore, speaking in general terms, the entire northern half of China will be completely surrounded by Russian railways. Given the supineness of China and the energy of Russia, and it is not difficult to forecast the results. In the second place, the ability of Russia to convey any number of European troops to a port on the Pacific, will give her an enormous advantage over any of her European rivals there. With a powerful Pacific fleet and a sufficient number of transports she will be able to descend almost irresistibly upon any part of the Far East except Japan, which has little to fear from any invader. Unless England secures a further and firmer foothold, at least a thousand miles north of Hongkong, she will not be in a position to dispute with Russia any step that the latter may choose to take. China is threatened territorially, Great Britain is menaced commercially, but—always excepting Japan—the Siberian Railway will place the whole of the Far East almost at the mercy of Russia, unless England casts off her confidence and indifference.

Finally, there is the question of the Russian port on the Pacific. Can anybody believe for a moment that Russia will build the longest railway in the world, stretching five thousand miles from the furthest edge of her European possessions, and will spend upwards of forty millions sterling upon it, for it to end in a harbour that is frozen solid during five months of the year? Nothing could be more unlikely. Except for some European cataclysm which will set back all Russian schemes for a century, it is certain (except in the case of one possible eventuality which I describe later) that the terminus of the Siberian Railway will be in Korea. And in Korea it will be at

Wön-san, or Port Lazareff, as she prefers to call it. This is a splendid harbour, easily fortifiable, open all the year, surrounded by a country offering many facilities for development. Such a port is absolutely essential to Russia, and who shall blame her for trying to secure it? At any rate, as soon as the South Usuri Section is joined to the rest of the finished Siberian Railway, Russia's moment will have come. First the piece of Manchuria which projects like a wedge into her territory will become hers by one means or another, enabling her greatly to shorten and straighten the railway, and then she will simply take such part of Korea as may suit her. If this be only the district of Wön-san, to begin with, the subsequent absorption of the whole of the Korean peninsula may follow. She will then be in possession of a good land route, across the Yalu river, straight to the heart of China at all seasons of the year, and her position in the Far East will be unassailable. Whatever else may be thought of the prospects of the Far East, however, let the fact that Russia intends to go to Korea be regarded as certain. My own views of the international question springing out of the Siberian Railway and this fact, particularly in so far as it concerns the future of Great Britain, will be found in subsequent chapters upon the question of Korea and the future of Japan.

SPAIN IN THE FAR EAST.

CHAPTER XI.

MANILA: THE CITY OF CIGARS, HEMP, EARTHQUAKES AND INTOLERANCE.

THE passage from Hongkong to the two thousand islands which constitute the Philippine group is usually accounted the worst in the China seas. It is a sort of sailing sideways, through cross-currents of very deep seas, and into the favourite hatching-place and haunt of the dreadful typhoon. Moreover, Manila is not the easiest place in the world to find. Its position is wrong on the charts, so my skipper assured me, and he would not find it unless he knew better himself. It is, too, one of the most earthquaky places in the world. When a British scientific and surveying expedition came some years ago to the Philippines, and wished among other things to determine the precise latitude and longitude once for all, although it waited for a couple of weeks the islands were never steady enough to afford a satisfactory base for the instruments. The earthquake season was on, and they were wobbling about the whole time! This may be a "yarn," but it is a fact that the seismographs of the Observatory are in a state of perpetual motion. For myself, however, Manila will always be remembered as the place where for the first time I had my pockets publicly and officially searched. As soon as we anchored, a guard of soldiers came on board and assisted the custom-house officials in minutely examining everything in our baggage. When this was over I was stopped at the head of the gangway by the lieutenant in command and courteously informed that before I could land he

must be permitted to see what I had in my pockets. When it came to my pocket-book he turned it over, separating every piece of paper in it. A bystander informed me that all this was to prevent the introduction of Mexican dollars, on which there is a premium, and which are prohibited of a date later than 1877, and a pamphlet attacking the priests, recently published in Hongkong. I tried to square accounts with this officer by hinting that I had copies of the forbidden pamphlet in my boots, but like the Prig, he only "answered with a silent smile."

In the most conspicuous spot in Manila stands a statue to Magellan, who discovered the Philippine Islands in his famous first circumnavigation of the globe in 1521, and whose lieutenant, Legaspi, founded the city fifty years later. Then came Manila's golden days. It was the goal of the galleon—imagination-stirring name—that made its romantic voyages from Spain, deep loaded with treasure; that named the coast California—fit godfather for the golden harvest of '49—before even a foot was set on it; whose captain earned forty thousand dollars by his trip, and pilot twenty thousand; whose treasure-chests yielded up a total of a million dollars to Drake alone; out of whose overflowing stores one victorious British cruiser sailed into the port of London with damask sails and silken rigging. The galleons are gone, the wars of which they were the constant prey are as forgotten as the men who fought them, and "the most fortunately situated city in the world," as La Pérouse called it, is far off in its lonely ocean, days distant from any of the great routes of commerce, almost unheeded by the world in which it was once so renowned, unvisited even by the ubiquitous globe-trotter. Yet there is something in the aspect of Manila suggestive of romance—something more picturesque than other places show. The first thing I saw was a native drifting down the river fast asleep on a heap of coconuts. Then the streets are dazzling with their "flowers of fire"—large trees ablaze with scarlet blossoms. The olive-skinned *mestizas*, half-caste descen-

dants of emigrated Spaniard and native Indian, step daintily along on bare feet encased in *chinelas*, embroidered heel-less slippers, with gay fluttering garments of *jusi*, a woven mixture of silk and pine-fibre, their loose jet-black hair reaching sometimes almost to the ground—one woman was pointed out to me whose hair was said to be eighty inches long—and their deep dark eyes passing over you in languid surprise. The native men are a community which has forgotten to tuck its shirt into its trousers. Their costume consists of a pair of white trousers and an elaborately pleated and starched shirt, with the tails left flying about. Every one is smoking a cheroot, and every other one has a game-cock under his arm, a constant companion and chief treasure, and sometimes chief source of income too, until the deadly spur on the heel of the stronger or pluckier rival turns all its pride and brilliance into a shapeless heap of blood and feathers in the dust, while a thousand voices execrate its memory.

The City of Manila consists of two parts: the Spanish walled city, called the parish of *Intra Muros*, and the general settlement outside. The former is crowded with Spanish houses, the streets being so narrow that in many of them two carriages cannot pass each other; their overhanging upper storeys make a perpetual twilight; the inhabitants go out but little, and the whole place leaves upon you an impression of darkness, of silence, of semi-stagnation. Outside the walls are the wharves, all the warehouses and business offices, the hotels, many large residences of the wealthy half-caste population, and as the city gradually merges in the country, the charming river-side bungalows of the foreign residents, the Club, the racecourse, and so on, till you reach the squalid but picturesque outlying native villages. Inside the city you cannot take a hundred steps without coming upon striking evidence of the earthquakes. Here is a church half broken down by the convulsion of such a year; there are the grass-grown ruins of the Government Palace destroyed by another historic outburst; in the great Cathedral

itself the lofty roof of the transept is split and cracked in an alarming fashion. On the shore of the bay there is an extensive and well laid-out boulevard or embankment, called the Luneta, where all fashionable Manila walks or drives in the evening to the music of the military band. Behind this are the forts, moss-covered antiquities of masonry, armed with rusty and harmless pieces which might have come from the gun-deck of some old galleon. The military authorities, however, make up in strictness of regulation what they lack in effectiveness of armament, for the foreign tennis-club was refused permission to play upon a piece of land within hypothetical range of these guns on the ground that it was "within the military zone," and I myself was told, though with great courtesy, by H. E. the Captain-General, that he must refuse me permission to take any photographs in which a part of the fortifications appeared. It was, of course, only for their ancient picturesqueness that I wished to photograph them—a mop vigorously twirled would be as effective for defence. In one fort at another place there are two decent modern guns, nearly surrounded by brittle masonry, and of these I purchased a large and excellent photograph taken from inside and showing every detail! Manila, however, if the information is of interest to anybody, could be reduced with ease by a couple of gunboats.

The history of Manila has been well divided * into four epochs: 1. The Chinese period; 2. The Spanish and Mexican period of monopoly before the introduction of steam traffic; 3. The period of open commerce with British predominance, which commences simultaneously with the age of steam; 4. The period from the opening of the Suez Canal until the present time. The Chinese were the original traders with the Philippine Islands, doing business always from their junks to the shore. They were persecuted and massacred, but returned in ever increasing numbers. Legaspi encouraged them, and their numbers at the beginning of the seventeenth

* By Mr. Consul Stigand, in a very interesting Report, F. O., No. 1391.

THE BOYS' BAND, MANILA.

FRENCH PRISONERS HANOI.

century have been estimated at thirty thousand. When the British occupied Manila in the course of one of the wars with Spain, the Chinese revenged themselves by joining the invaders, in return for which, as soon as our ships had left, a general massacre of Chinese was ordered and carried out, and so late as 1820, says Mr. Stigand, another massacre of Chinese and foreigners took place. At the present day there are one hundred thousand Chinese in the Archipelago, of whom forty thousand are settled in Manila, where they occupy the chief shops and do almost all the artisans' work. The second period was that of purely Spanish commerce, from 1571 to the beginning of this century. The Philippines were a dependence of Mexico, communication was forbidden except through Acapulco, from which port the State galleons, termed *Naos de Acapulco*, made their annual voyages, laden with the treasure which has rendered their name one of the most picturesque words in history. They were four-deckers, of about 1,500 tons, and strongly armed. In times of war they were, as everybody knows, the easy and greatly-sought prey of the enemy's ships. One of them, the *Pilar*, captured by Anson, was a prize worth a million and half dollars. At last foreign enemies pressed them so hard that after the Philippines had been without a State galleon for six years, they were discarded, and a commercial company, largely financed by the King of Spain himself, was formed in 1765, and to it was conceded the exclusive privilege of trading between Spain and the Archipelago, except for the direct traffic between Manila and Acapulco. This monopoly in its turn came to an end in 1834, and from that time the Philippines have been, according to Spanish ideas, open to commerce. The opening of the Suez Canal brought Manila within thirty-two days' steam of Barcelona, and, as Mr. Stigand avers, doubled the importance of the commerce of the Philippine Islands, which now reaches the yearly sum of fifty million dollars. The two principal banks, and the principal firms in Manila, are all British, and of the ships that entered and

cleared from the port during 1893, amounting to 240 in all, 139 were British and 53 Spanish. But for the excessive port dues and the bad harbour accommodation which compels cargoes to be carried in lighters to ships lying off the Bay, foreign trade with Manila would undoubtedly be greater than it is. The one railway in the islands, from Manila to Dagupan, which has just been completed by the building of a bridge over the Rio Grande river, has also been constructed chiefly with British capital, on which it promises ultimately to pay a good return. The fall of silver has hit it very hard, however, since the Government subsidy which, at par of exchange, would be £85,000, is only £53,000 at the present rate. Japanese enterprise is likely to make itself felt before long here as elsewhere, since Mr. Nakamura, formerly Japanese Consul, is announced to be on the point of establishing a trading company in Manila, with a capital of half a million dollars.

Considered as a contemporary community, Manila is an interesting example of the social product of the Roman Catholic Church when unrestrained by any outside influence. Here the Church has free sway, uninterrupted by alien faith, undeterred by secular criticism. All is in the hands of the priests. The great monasteries, with their high barred windows, shelter the power, the wealth, the knowledge of the community. The Dominicans, with their Archbishop, the Augustinians, the *Recoletanos*, and the Franciscans, divide the people among them, their influence being in the order I have named them. Wise in the knowledge of that which they have created, their own wealth is invested in foreign banks, chiefly in Hongkong, though that of the Dominicans, richest of all, is entrusted to the Agra Bank. The people are plunged in superstition, and their principal professed interest in life (after cock-fighting) is the elaborate religious procession for which every feast-day offers a pretext. The two newspapers are parodies of the modern press, ignorant of news, devoid of opinion save the priests', devoted in equal parts to homily and twaddle. The port, for its exasperating

restrictions and obstructions, is said by agents and captains to be the most disagreeable in the world to enter or leave. The civil authority itself is in many respects subject to the religious: during the chief religious festivals nobody but the Archbishop is permitted to ride in a carriage. A large part of the real estate of the city is in the possession of the religious orders. If you would prosper, it is absolutely indispensable that you should be on good terms with the priests. Their suspicion and disfavour mean ruin. The personal liberty of the common man may almost be said to be in their keeping. It is hardly necessary to add that the people as a whole are idle and dissipated, and that most of the trade is in the hands of the foreign houses. Altogether, Manila, distant as it is from other communities, with little intercourse to enlighten it, and few visitors to criticise or report, is a remarkable and instructive example of the free natural development of "age-reared priestcraft and its shapes of woe."

Of the six characteristics of Manila—tobacco, hemp, earthquakes, cock-fighting, priestcraft and orchids—the first two are known to all the world. Manila cigars and Manila hemp are household words, the yearly product of the former reaching the colossal total of nearly 140,000,000, besides tobacco, and of the latter 80,000 tons, of which Great Britain takes considerably more than half. Orchid-hunters come here year after year, travel far into the virgin forests of the interior, and emerge again after months of absence, if fever and the native Tagalos spare them, with a few baskets full of strange flowers which they carry home with infinite precaution and sell for a king's ransom. I was told of one collector who sold a plant for £500. Tobacco is of course the staple industry, and a morning spent in a tobacco factory is extremely interesting. Through the kindness of Messrs. Smith, Bell & Co., the leading business-house in Manila, I visited the most important of these, "La Flor de la Isabella," and followed the tobacco from its arrival in the bale, through the seasoning-room, to the wetting and

sorting-tubs, on the benches where it is rolled into cigars, past the selecting-table where its colour and quality are decided by a lightning expert, through the drying-room, and at last into the gaily-labelled cedar box. Manila tobacco is considered here to be superior to any in the world, except the famous "Vuelta Abajo" of Cuba, and millions of Manila cigars are sold as Havanas. In fact, the two styles, Manila and Cuban, the former with the end cut blunt off and parallel sides, are turned out in almost equal quantities. Five colours are distinguished for sale, Maduro, Colorado Maduro, Colorado, Colorado claro, and Claro, although the expert at the selecting-table divides his heap into thirty different colours. The filling of a cigar is called *tripa*, or tripe, the wrapper *capa*, or overcoat. London takes assorted colours, while the dark brands are sent to Spain, the light ones to New York, and the straight cheroots to India. From this factory a million and a half cigars are shipped every month to one London firm alone. The figures of tobacco-making are astounding. At "La Flor de la Isabella," and this is only one of a score of factories in Manila, 4,000 people are employed, their hours of labour being eight, from 7 to 12 and from 2 to 5 o'clock. And from the huge "Imperiales" to the tiny "Coquetas" and the twisted "Culebras," 4,000,000 in Manila style and 1,500,000 in Cuban style are made monthly. But cigarette-making caps the climax. The tobacco leaves are cut into *hebra* or thread, which we call "long-cut," and the whole process of making is done by a single machine. I saw nine of these hard at work, and each turns out twelve thousand in a day. It is a simple sum: $9 \times 12{,}000 \times 30 \times 12$, say 38,000,000 cigarettes a year from one factory. And yet—

> "There is poison, they say, in thy kisses,
> O pale cigarette!"

Or, from the other point of view, what an altar for Mr. Lowell's worship of—

"the kind nymph to Bacchus born
By Morpheus' daughter, she that seems
Gifted upon her natal morn
By him with fire, by her with dreams."

The great cockpit of Manila at the "Fiesta del Pueblo" is one of the most remarkable spectacles in the world. Imagine a huge circus with an arena raised to the height of the faces of those standing; behind them tier upon tier gradually rising; above the arena, which is enclosed with fine wire netting, the red draped box of the farmer—the leading Chinaman of Manila, named Señor Palanca; and a packed audience of four thousand people. Squatting on the earthen floor of the ring, inside the wire netting, are the *habitués*, half Chinese and half *Mestizos*, while the officials walk about—the *juez de justicia* or referee, the *sentenciador* or umpire, the *casador*, "go-between" or betting-master, and several others. Then two men enter the ring, each carrying a bird whose spur is shielded for the moment in a leather scabbard. One wears his hat—he is the owner of the challenging bird—called *llamado;* the other, hatless, is the outsider or *dejado*, who takes up the challenge. An official calls out the sum for which the challenger's owner backs it, and how much is still lacking to make up the sum. Then comes the most extraordinary scene of all. The moment the words are out of his mouth, it rains dollars in the ring. From those inside, from those who are within throwing distance, apparently from everywhere, dollars pour in, without method, without ownership, without a bargain, so far as one can judge amid the deafening clamour. When the sums on the birds are equal the betting master shouts *Casada!* "matched," literally "married," the farmer from his box on high yells *Larga!*—"loose them," and the fight begins. Sometimes it lasts ten minutes, sometimes only a second, the first shock leaving one bird a mangled corpse. No need to describe it—every one knows how a cock fights, and that it is the very gamest and pluckiest thing that lives. The fight over, the betting-master goes round

handing money back recklessly, so it seems, to anybody who holds out a hand. I asked Señor Palanca how betting could possibly be carried on like this. He replied that each one asks for or takes the sum that belongs to him. But if anybody should put out his hand for another's money? He gave me to understand that it was never done, and that if anybody were detected doing so he would probably have a dozen knives in his body on the spot. In a short time I had witnessed 105 cock-fights, and I shall never willingly see another. The entry of the two brilliant birds; the final adjustment of the long razor-edged spurs; the frantic betting; the rain of silver; the irritation of the birds, held up to pull a few feathers out of each other in turn; their stealthy approach; the dead silence; the sudden double spring and mad beating of wings; the fall of one or perhaps both, the gay plumage drenched in blood, and perhaps a wing half-severed and hanging down; the mad yells; the winning bird carried carefully away, the loser picked up like carrion and flung away with a curse; the distribution of money; the instant appearance of another pair—the ceaseless spectacle was an obsession of horror. The authorities make a large revenue from the cockpit. For this and one other, Señor Palanca pays 68,600 dollars a year, and there are five other farmers.

Two other reminiscences may conclude my sketch of Manila. One is that a hundred people were dying every day of cholera while I was there, and several times my guide pushed me hastily back against the wall as we threaded our way along the narrow streets, and stuffed his camphorated handkerchief in his mouth, muttering "*Colerico!*" as a couple of men passed bearing on their shoulders a long object wrapped in a sheet and slung between two poles—the latest case going to the hospital. One of the Chinese firemen died of cholera on board the steamer three hours before we sailed. The other reminiscence is that the thermometer stood at 105° in the shade, as I saw, and at 160° in the sun, as I was told.

The Philippine Islands are the only Spanish possession in the Far East. Indeed, only a part of them can properly be said to be in Spanish possession at all, as the natives of many of the islands have never been brought under Spanish rule. At this moment hostilities are proceeding in the almost unknown island of Mindanao, with uncertain results as yet. Although mining has always been a failure, there is undoubtedly vast wealth in the tropical forests of the Philippines, but it will hardly be developed under the present *régime*. In spite of her growing fleet of first-class cruisers at home, Spain is without influence in the Far East outside her own immediate territories, and she will play little or no part in shaping its destinies.

PORTUGAL IN THE FAR EAST.

CHAPTER XII.

MACAO: THE LUSITANIAN THULE.

WHERE the carcase is, there also will the eagles be gathered together." China is the great carcase of Asia, and round her the eagles of Europe and America press and jostle one another. England is entrenched at Hongkong, and many a fat slice has she carried away. And now she is stretching out another claw through Thibet. America has half of Shanghai, and to and from San Francisco the bird of prey passes regularly in his flight. France is trying hard to carry off her share of the carcase through Tongking, and Port Arthur in the north brought huge sums to a French syndicate. Herr Krupp has secured Germany's chief plunder, and the Yamên of Li Hung-chang at Tientsin is a nest of commercial intrigue on behalf of the Fatherland. And Russia is laying a heavy paw upon China from the north. All this is natural enough, and so far as England and America are concerned it is the inevitable flow of trade in the channels of least resistance. But among the birds around this Asiatic carcase there is a beetle; among the birds of prey there is a parasite. The extreme south-east corner of China is the scene of the dying struggles of a mongrel fragment of a once intrepid and famous race—a fragment drawing its meagre sustenance with more difficulty every day. The hand of Vasco da Gama would have wavered upon the helm as he rounded the Cape of Good Hope, of all the men in Europe "the first that ever burst into the silent seas" of the East, if he could have foreseen to what a wretched pass and laughing-stock

his countrymen there would come after less than four hundred years. The daughter of a King of Portugal was at Hongkong a few years ago. She went, of course, to visit her own people and stand under her own flag at Macao. But a glimpse was too much for her, and she left within twelve hours.

Yet Macao (what is the relation of its name, one wonders, to the Piccadilly game over which Beau Brummel used to preside, doubtless with much profit to himself, at Watier's?) is not such a bad place, at first sight. Its bay is a perfect crescent. Around this runs a broad boulevard, called the Praya Grande, shadowed with fine old arching banyan trees. At each horn the Portuguese flag waves over a little fort. Behind the town, green wooded hills rise like an amphitheatre, and among the houses a picturesque old building sticks up here and there — the cathedral, the barracks, the military hospital, the older Fort Monte. The whitewashed houses with their green blinds and wide shady porticoes and verandas, from which dark eyes look idly down upon you as you pass, recall many a little Italian and Spanish town. A couple of yacht-like Portuguese gunboats lie at anchor in the river beyond the bay. On Sundays and Thursdays the band plays in the public gardens, and surely nowhere in the world do the buglers linger so long over the reveille and the retreat as they do here every day. To the busy broker or merchant of Hongkong, who runs over here in the summer from Saturday to Monday, after a week of hard work and perspiration, coining dollars in a Turkish bath, Macao is a tiny haven of rest, where the street is free from the detestable ceaseless chatter of Chinamen, where the air is fresh and the hills green, and where a little "flutter" at *fan-tan* is a miniature and amusing substitute for the daily struggle with exchanges and settlements and short sales.

And Macao has its glorious past, too. After they had rounded the Cape the Portuguese occupied a great part of the coast of India, sent an Embassy to the Emperor of China, and occupied Ningpo. There one night 1,200 of them were

murdered. So they resettled a place called Chinchew, where the same fate overtook them. Nothing daunted, they came further south, and after helping the Chinese to destroy hordes of pirates were permitted to settle in peace on a small peninsula near the mouth of one of the two river approaches to Canton. Here Macao was founded in 1557, and up to 1848 the Portuguese paid a yearly rental of 500 dollars in presents or money. In 1582 when the Crown of Portugal passed to Spain, Macao followed suit. When it went back again in 1640 in the person of John IV. of Portugal, Macao again changed its flag and made "a great donation" to the new king. At this time it was described as "a melhor ê mas prospero columna que os Portugueyes tem em todo o Oriente"—the best and most prosperous colony that the Portuguese possess in all the East. Then its population was 19,500. By 1830 it had dwindled to 4,628, of so mixed a blood that only 90 persons were registered as of pure Portuguese descent. To-day it holds 63,500 Chinese, 4,476 so-called Portuguese, and 78 others—in all 68,086. What is the explanation of this sudden enormous multiplication of its population? Like Satan, Macao was "by merit raised to that bad eminence." It won back its ancient prosperity by offering its houses and its traders as the last refuge in the East to that hell upon earth, the legalised coolie traffic. When Hongkong stopped this for ever under the British flag by the Chinese Passengers Act of 1854, Macao opened eager and unscrupulous arms to the "labour agents," and for nearly twenty years, when public opinion became too strong for even this mongrel and far-away community, the little city flourished, its inhabitants made fortunes, the Praya Grande was crowded every evening by a gay and gaudy throng, the streets were beautified, the cathedral was rebuilt, and the Portuguese colony became famous throughout the East for its elaborate religious processions and its eloquent priests. And during these twenty years uncounted thousands of coolies were decoyed, entrapped, stolen, and pirated to Macao, kept

prisoners in the gloomy "barracoons," whose grated windows are still everywhere visible, theoretically certified as voluntary contract labourers by an infamous profit-sharing *procurador*, and then shipped to toil, and starve, and rot, and die in mines and fields and plantations everywhere, literally "from China to Peru." As a single specimen of the traffic it is commonly affirmed that of 4,000 coolies sent to the foul guano-pits of the Chincha Islands, not a single soul returned. Altogether 500,000 Chinese were exported *viâ* Macao, before the traffic was finally extinguished in 1875. There has been lately a semi-surreptitious attempt to revive the trade. A company was formed to supply a million Chinese to South America, and a ship called the *Tetartos* actually carried 300 "free labourers" to Brazil in October of last year, concerning whose destination and fate there is still great uncertainty. And it has been rumoured that a new and influential coolie emigration "ring" is being planned, but fortunately public opinion and Chinese official opposition may be counted upon to thwart its efforts.

A retribution has fallen upon Macaq—it seems as though the curses of the murdered coolies have come back to it. Not a soul walks the beautiful Praya; the harbour is silting up so fast, from the detritus brought down by the Pearl and West rivers, between which Macao is situated, that in a few years there will not be as many feet of water in it; even the Chinese are leaving it—the last of rats to quit a sinking ship; its miserable inhabitants, interbred from Chinese, Portuguese, Malay, Indian, and unknown human jetsam to such an extent that the few Portuguese troops here regard the Chinaman as socially superior to the "Mestiços," have fallen into utter apathy; they hardly show themselves out of doors, they subsist on monies furnished to them by their pluckier relatives in foreign employ in Hongkong and elsewhere, and the military band in the public gardens plays to a score of loafers. There is no manufacture, no social life, and almost no trade since the smuggling of opium has been stopped by Sir

Robert Hart's recent treaty, giving Macao in perpetuity to the Portuguese on the condition that its Customs should be virtually controlled by his staff.

Another illegitimate source of income was lost to Macao in 1885. The most intense interest is taken in China—an interest comparable only to that of the great sporting events of the year with us—in the official literary and military examinations in Peking, and upon the results of these every other man in China desires to have a wager. A lottery to this end, called the Wei-sing Lottery, has existed for a long time. The Chinese Government have made more or less sincere efforts to put it down; indeed, in 1874 the Emperor went so far as to cashier the Governor-General Ying Han for sanctioning its establishment in Canton. The authorities of Macao, of course, saw the possibilities of an enormous profit herein. They therefore farmed out the lottery to a Chinaman, who smuggled the tickets from Portuguese into Chinese territory, and who paid them 353,000 dollars a year for the privilege. Against this the Chinese were powerless, so in 1885, in self-defence, they consented to the Wei-sing in China, with the result that the sum the monopolist was able to pay the government of Macao fell instantly to 36,000 dollars. Trade is going the way of the coolie traffic, the opium-smuggling and the lottery revenue, but the peculiar genius of Macao is not yet at an end. According to the British Vice-Consul, a new source of income has been invented in what is called "lie" tea, the legitimate tea trade having almost completely fallen off. Mr. Joly writes: "This term sufficiently explains its quality, for there is no doubt that the mixture could only be called tea in its correct acceptation through a considerable sacrifice of truth. These teas are manufactured from exhausted tea-leaves, which are dried, re-fired, and mixed with a certain proportion of genuine tea and of seeds and dust. Most of this preparation proceeds to Hamburg, where no 'Adulteration Act' is in force; but a good deal of mystery enshrouds its ultimate fate, for there are

various versions as to its disposal, some parties averring that it is consumed by the lower classes, others that it is sold to ships, and others that a quantity of it probably leaks into England as well. From what I can gather, some of this 'lie' tea is often packed in chests labelled 'best Congou,' and shipped to India for the lower classes. But tastes differ, just as the tea sent to France and the Continent generally is a mere conglomeration of stalks and twigs, and to all appearances no tea at all." Macao, however, is practically being wiped out of existence by Hongkong, with its enormously greater capital, enterprise and freedom of trade. So far from attempting to meet this competition, the Macanese authorities go blindly along the old road of commercial restriction, the port dues at Macao being exactly three times what they are at Hongkong. In 1854 the Abbé Huc wrote as follows: "Aujourd'hui Macao n'est guère plus qu'un souvenir; l'établissement anglais de Hongkong lui a donné le coup mortel; il ne lui reste de son antique prospérité que de belles maisons sans locataires, et dans quelques années, peut-être, les navires européens, en passant devant la presqu'île où fut cette fière et riche colonie portugaise, ne verront plus qu'un rocher nu, désolé, tristement battu par les vagues, et où le pêcheur chinois viendra faire sécher ses noirs filets." Although this prophecy is not yet wholly fulfilled, each year brings its realisation nearer. One peculiar source of revenue, however, remains—the sale of postage-stamps. Whenever Macao desires a lift for its treasury it is able to secure it by abandoning one set of stamps and issuing another, when philatelists from all over the world eagerly add it to their inflated collections. Our consul declares that he has "endless applications from different countries for stamps of this colony."

Portugal doles out to Macao a yearly pittance, and its other chief source of revenue is the 150,000 dollars it draws annually from its gaming-tables. For, as I have said, whenever one wickedness was stopped in Macao it was quick to find another, and to-day it is the only place in the Far East where you can

play *fan-tan* under a foreign flag. But its history is almost closed, the days of its disappearing trade and its decomposing population are numbered, and unless a Cement Company which has been started on a small island leased from the bishop, or the establishment of bonded warehouses, as suggested by the Chinese Customs, should bring back a semblance of prosperity, this "gem of the orient earth and open sea" will have disappeared like other places and peoples which were, sinned too much, and are not.

One classic memory, however, may save Macao from oblivion. It was here that the exiled Camoens composed the greater part of his *Lusiads*. On one of the hillsides overlooking the bay is an extensive old shrubbery, where narrow paths twist in and out among gnarled and ancient trees, and where half-a-dozen enormous boulders heaped together form a natural archway or grotto—the *Gruta de Camoēs*. Camoens was appointed *Provedor dos defuntos e ausentes*—Commissary for the Defunct and the Absent—in Macao, and is supposed to have come here every day to work at his great task. The place, which is now known as "Camoens' Garden," belongs to a family named Marques, and by them a remarkably fine bronze bust of the half-blind poet, inscribed "Luiz de Camoēs, Nasceo 1524, Morreo 1580," was placed in the arch in 1840, upon a pedestal bearing six cantos of the *Lusiads*, while tributes to him in half-a-dozen languages are engraved upon stone tablets placed around. There is a fine sonnet of Tasso's and various verses in Portuguese and Spanish, while Sir John Bowring's exaggeration is unfortunately conspicuous:—

> "Gem of the orient earth and open sea,
> Macao, that in thy lap and on thy breast
> Has gathered beauties all the loveliest
> On which the sun smiles in his majesty;"

and so on. One degree worse in style, though a thousand times truer are some wonderful Latin verses perpetrated by a Mr. David, who laments—

"Sed jam vetustas aut manus impia
Prostravit, eheu! Triste silentium
Regnare nunc solum videtur
Per scopulos, virides et umbras!"

Among all, however, the sincerest seems to me to be some quaint lines in French, said to have been written by the commander of a French man-of-war which visited Macao in 1827, and ingeniously dedicated as follows:—

"Au Grand Luis de Camoens, Portugais d'origine Castillane,
Soldat religieux, voyageur et poète exilé,
L'humble Louis de Rienzi, Français d'origine Romaine,
Voyageur religieux, soldat et poète expatrié."

This poet too was doleful, for apostrophising Camoens he says:—

"Agité plus que toi, je fuyai dans les champs,
Et le monde, et mon cœur, l'envie et les tyrans."

What the Macanese of to-day think of Camoens may be judged from the fact that I tried in vain to borrow or buy in Macao a copy of the *Lusiads*, to see what are the stanzas engraved on the pedestal, the chiselling having become illegible. Camoens himself was shipwrecked off Malacca on his way home when pardoned, and swam ashore with the manuscript of the *Lusiads*, losing everything else. Curiously enough, by the way, on leaving the grotto and turning into the old half-deserted cemetery I came across an old-fashioned granite monument, with this inscription: "Sacred to the Memory of the Right Hon. Lord Henry John Spencer Churchill, 4th son of George 5th Duke of Marlborough, Captain of H.B.M.S. *Druid*, and Senior Officer in the China Seas. Departed this life in Macao roads, 2nd June, 1840. This monument is erected by His Officers and Petty Officers in testimony of their Esteem and Affection."

Finally, Macao, as I have said, is the Monaco of the East,

and from its gaming-tables its impecunious government reaps 150,000 dollars a year, the price said to be paid by the syndicate of Chinese proprietors for the monopoly. The game is a peculiarly Chinese one, well fitted to afford full scope to the multitude of refinements and hypothetical elaborations with which the Chinaman, the greatest gambler on earth, loves to surround his favourite vice. It is played on a mat-covered table, with a small square of sheet lead and a heap of artificial gilded "cash." On one side stands the croupier, on the adjoining side sits the dealer, and between them, a little to the rear, is the desk and treasury of the cashier. The sides of the leaden square are called one, two, three, and four. The dealer takes up from the heap as many "cash" as he can grasp with both hands and places them apart upon the table. Then the players, who sit and stand round the other two sides of the table, make their bets, that is, they place at either side of the square any sum from 50 cents to 500 dollars, or at either corner any sum up to 1,500 dollars. When all have done, the dealer slowly counts the heap out in fours, and the last remaining four or three or two or one, as the case may be, is the winning number. Those who have placed their money at the corresponding side of the square, which is called playing *fan*, are paid three to one; those who have staked at the corner, covering two numbers or playing *tan*, are paid even money if either number wins. From all winnings the bank deducts eight per cent. Besides the above ways, there are many other of infinite complication, scored with buttons and cards and ivory counters, which nobody except a Celestial can possibly understand. But they play with the greatest eagerness, the coolie who works a week to save his dollar, the shopkeeper who calmly stakes his watch and chain if he is short of ready money, and the well-to-do merchant, who watches the game for half an hour to judge of the chances and then lays down his hundred dollar bill and walks imperturbably away whatever the result may be. Of course everybody asks, cannot the dealer after years of

practice take up a fixed number of "cash" according to the sums staked upon the table? It seems probable, but I have watched him for a long time and I am convinced that if he could it would in nearly all cases be impracticable, for many sufficient reasons. A few years ago it was common enough to see a thousand dollars on the table for a single deal, when the Hongkong brokers were rich, and came over on Saturday nights.

Conspicuous in Macao are the following lines by S. de Passos, chiselled in marble over an arch :—

"Nacão que dormes, do sepulchro a borda,
Ergue-te, surge, como outr' ora, ovante!
Teu genio antigo, teu valor recorda,
E aprende n'elle a caminhar avante!"

But the appeal comes too late. Portugal had her Eastern glory, as she had also what Richard Burton called her "manifold villainies." Her share in the politics of the Far East is gone for ever, and Macao is not even an inspiring monument to its memory.

CHINA.

CHAPTER XIII.

PEKING AND ITS INHABITANTS.

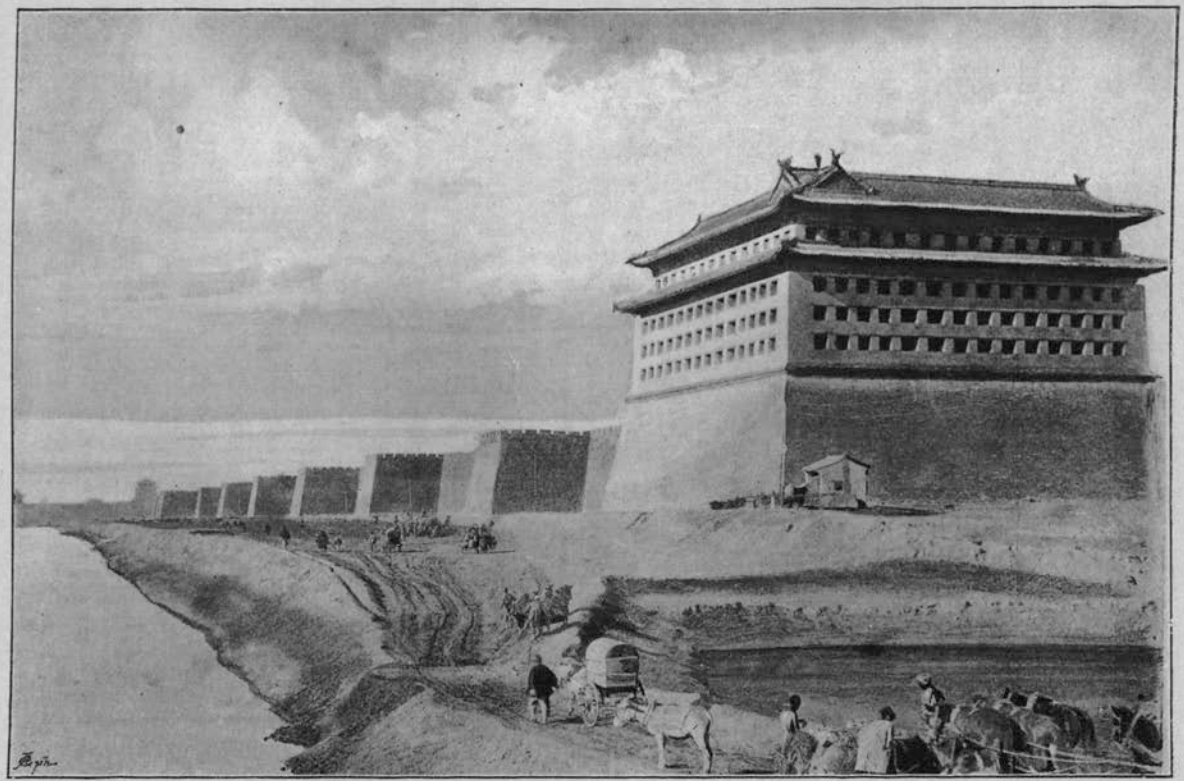
AS soon as you are safely on Chinese soil at Tientsin you begin to ask how far it is to Peking and how you can get there. You are told eighty miles by road, and a hundred and twenty by river, and that there are three methods of travel open to you—cart, horseback, and boat. I chose the second, hired a couple of ponies and a *mafoo* (groom), and thankfully left the noisy, narrow, and nasty streets of the native city of Tientsin behind me at seven o'clock one bright Sunday morning. Then forty miles of jog-trot and canter along a narrow path across a landscape of dry mud, and a night at a Chinese inn—a series of small cold, bare guest-rooms surrounded by a hollow square of stalls. To bed at eight, up again at three in order that the cart which carries the baggage and bedding and food might start and reach Peking before the gates are closed at five o'clock.

A trip to Peking is good for two moments of interest and satisfaction—two real sensations of traveller's delight. The first is at first sight of the walls of the great city, after the second dull ride of forty miles. You enter through a gate of no proportions or pretensions, you ride for a quarter of an hour among hovels and pigs, and then suddenly on climbing a bank a striking sight bursts upon you. A great tower of many storeys forms the corner of a mighty wall; from each of its storeys a score cannon-mouths yawn; for a mile or more the wall stretches in a perfectly straight line, pierced with a thousand embrasures, supported by a hundred buttresses. Then you halt

your pony and sit and try to realise that another of the desires of your life is gratified; that you are at last really and truly before the walls of the city that was old centuries before the wolf and the woodpecker found Romulus and Remus; in the wonderland of Marco Polo, father of travellers; on the eve of exploring the very capital and heart of the Celestial Empire. This is the first of your two precious moments. When you ride on you discover that the cannon-mouths are just black and white rings painted on boards, and the swindle—fortunately you do not know it then—is your whole visit to Peking in a nutshell. The place is a gigantic disappointment.

Although the temptation is great to write marvels about a place one has come so far to see—to play Polo, so to speak, on one's own account—the truth is that Peking is not worth the trip. It is worth coming to study, but not to see. The nose is the only sense appealed to by the capital of China. It is not half as picturesque a place as Seoul, nor a quarter as interesting as San Francisco. Moreover, you cannot see nearly as much of it to-day as you could a few years ago. One by one the show-places have been closed to foreigners, and the Marble Bridge, the Summer Palace, the Temple of Heaven—to mention only the first that come to mind—are now hermetically closed against the barbarian, and neither rank nor money nor impudence can force an entrance. Even the ascents to the top of the wall—the only place where a foreigner can walk in comfort and decency—are now barred, and you must find a bribable sentry. And if by reason of strength or luck you do get into one of the forbidden spots you are very likely to have a narrow escape—as I had at the Great Llama Temple—of never getting out again.

The history of Peking is to be read in the walls which surround it in ruin or in preservation, and if you trace them within and without the city (I did not) they will show you where lay the "Nanking" of the Khitan Tartars in 986; how the famous "Golden Horde" of Kin Tartars laid out their



THE FIRST SIGHT OF PEKING.

capital of Chung-tu in 1151; what Genghiz Khan and his Mongols thought a great city should be in 1215; how the immortal Khublai Khan constructed Khanbalik, "the city of the Khan," a century later—Polo calls it Cambaluc; and much more interesting history down to the advent of the present Manchus in 1644. And it is the walls, in excellent preservation, that mark the divisions of the Peking of to-day—first, the so-called "Chinese" or Outer City, more properly the Southern City; adjoining it the Inner or "Tartar City," properly called Northern; inside this the "Imperial City," and inside this again, like the inmost pill-box in a nest, the "Forbidden City," the actual Imperial residence itself. The ethnological distinctions of Chinese and Tartar are practically effaced; the only distinction for the flying visitor is that the shops are in the Chinese City, while most of the temples, public buildings, and "sights," together with all the foreign residences, are in the Tartar City, and that the wall of the latter is much the larger and more massive structure. The ground-plan of Peking is supposed to represent a human body, the palace being the heart, but it is better described as being laid out on the chess-board plan of American cities west of Chicago. There are two great streets which intersect at a central point, and from all parts of these other streets, lanes and alleys run in straight lines. Every corner in Peking seems to be a right angle; there are no winding thoroughfares. The houses are all very low with flat roofs, and I did not see a single first-class Chinese dwelling-house in the whole city. But it is the streets of Peking that strike the observer first, and fade last from his recollection. Whether wide or narrow, dark alley or main artery, they are entirely unpaved—the native alluvial soil and the native sewage form every Pekingese pathway. From this state of things spring several curious consequences. The roads are so uneven, the holes in them so numerous and deep, the ridges so high and steep, that no vehicle with springs can navigate half a mile. The only conveyance, therefore, is the famous Peking cart, an

enormously strong and heavy square two-wheeled, covered vehicle, drawn by a mule, the passenger squatting tailor-fashion inside and the driver sitting on the shaft. If you go out to dinner or your wife goes to church, this is practically your only vehicle, as there are very few chairs in Peking. But to be rolled about and jolted in one of these is simple torture, and if you do not hold on closely to the hand-rails inside you run no little risk of having your brains dashed out. After a good shower of rain in Peking you cannot set foot out of doors; the mud is often three feet deep, and the centre of the street sometimes a couple of feet higher than the sides. But on the other hand, if no rain comes there is the dust, and a Peking dust-storm, once experienced, is a dreadful memory for ever. After a drought the dust is ankle-deep, every night at sunset it is watered with the liquid sewage of the city, and so it has come to be composed of dried pulverised earth and dried pulverised filth in about equal proportions. And when the storm comes you are blinded and choked by it; it penetrates your clothing to the skin; windows and doors and curtains and covers do not stop it for an instant; people say it even finds its way into air-tight boxes. So whether the barometer indicates "rain" or "fair," you are equally badly off. The Secretary of the British Legation says in his latest Report: "The foreign community started a roads' committee with the praiseworthy desire of cleansing and levelling the foul streets immediately around the legations and Customs residences. A water-cart was purchased and created no small sensation among the populace on its first appearance; but only a torrent of rain suffices to lay the deep dust of Peking, and the efforts to remove the filth of the roads have proved inadequate and almost abortive." Few European travellers, he adds, have visited Peking during the past three years.

To learn what the Chinaman really thinks about the foreigner, you must go to Peking: no other city in China will serve so well. And the discovery will be far from flattering to your

national pride. Peking is the only place I have ever visited where the mere fact of being a foreigner, a stranger in speech, dress, and manners, did not of itself secure one a certain amount of consideration, or at any rate make one the object of useful interest. Here the precise opposite is the case. The "foreign devil" is despised at sight—not merely hated, but regarded with sincere and profound contempt. "If the Tsungli Yamên were abolished," said a Peking diplomat to me, "our lives would not be safe here for twenty-four hours. The people just refrain from actually molesting us because they have learned that they will be very severely punished if they do." At home we cherish the belief that we are welcome in China, that the Chinese are pleased to learn of our Western civilisation, that they are gradually and gladly assimilating our habits and views, and that the wall of prejudice is slowly breaking down. It would hardly be possible to be more grossly and painfully mistaken. The people to a man detest and despise us (I am speaking, of course, of the real Chinese, not of the anglicised Chinese of Hongkong and elsewhere, who are but a drop in the ocean of Celestial humanity); and as for the rulers, it will not be far from the truth to say that the better they know us, the less they like us.

Let us say that you start out in the morning for a prowl in Peking. What are your relations with the people you meet? First of all, of course, they crowd round you whenever you stop, and in a minute you are the centre of a mass of solid humanity, which is eating horrible stuff, which is covered with vermin, which smells worse than words can tell, and which is quite likely to have small-pox about it. As for taking a photograph in the streets, it is out of the question. The only way I could manage this was to place my camera on the edge of a bridge, where they could not get in front of the lens, and then I was in imminent danger of being pushed into the canal, as the bridges have no rail or parapet. The crowd jostles you, feels your clothes with its dirty hands, pokes its nose in your face, keeping up all the time (I was generally with a friend who

understood Chinese) a string of insulting and obscene remarks, with accompanying roars of laughter. By and by the novelty and fun of this wear off, and you get first impatient and then infuriated. But beware, above all things, of striking or even laying a finger on one of these dirty wretches. That would be probably a fatal mistake. They will do nothing but talk and push; but if you should hit one of them, you would be more than likely not to get away alive, or at least without bad injuries. But suppose that you walk steadily and imperturbably on? The pedestrian you meet treats you with much less consideration than one of his own countrymen; the children run to the door to cry "*Kueidzu!*"—"devil!"—at you. They have other indescribable and worse ways of insulting you. When a member of a foreign legation was riding underneath the wall, a brick was dropped upon him from the top. It just missed his head and struck the horse behind the saddle. The Chinese children, again, have an original way of amusing themselves at the expense of the foreign devils. A child will provide itself with a big fire-cracker, and then sit patiently at the door till he sees you in the distance coming along on your pony. Then he will run out, drop the cracker in the road, light the slow-match with a fire-stick, and retire to a safe place to watch events. With devilish precocity he generally manages to cause it to explode just under your pony's nose; and if you are lucky enough to keep your seat and pull up a mile or so in the direction you do not wish to go, he doubtless considers that his experiment has only been a moderate success. If you should break your neck and be left there dead in the road, that would confer imperishable lustre upon his family and neighbourhood. When this has happened to you once or twice, you learn to jog about the Celestial City with short reins and your knees stuck well into your saddle, ready for developments at any moment. I was told that Lady Walsham's chair was actually stopped in the open street and she herself grossly insulted, that a member of our Consular service was nearly killed outside the Llama temple,

THE BRITISH LEGATION, PEKING.

and that there are few foreigners who have not had some unpleasant experience or other. No doubt it is sometimes the foreigner's own fault, but a life-member of the Aborigines Protection Society would fail to get on smoothly at all times.

The foreign legations in Peking are in a street near the chief gate of the Tartar City, known among the foreigners as "Legation Street." It is half a mile long, either mud or dust, as level as a chopping sea, with here and there its monotony of blank walls or dirty native houses broken by a strong gateway with a couple of stone lions in front. These are the legations; and inside the gate you find pleasant gardens and generally spacious and comfortable foreign houses, sometimes built *ad hoc* and sometimes converted to their present use from Chinese temples. So long as you are the stranger within the gates, you are extremely well off; but as soon as the porter shuts them behind you—well, the residents in Peking say it is a charming place, but for my part I can only believe in their veracity at the expense of their taste. I would rather live in Seven Dials or Five Points. When your guide says, "This is Legation Street," you laugh, it is so dirty, so miserable, with its horrible crowd of dogs and pigs and filthy children. But when you have lived in it for a few days you laugh no more: you count the hours till you can get away.

What, however, about the "sights" of Peking? To be truthful is to declare frankly that there are almost none. Much the finest building that I saw—indeed, the only one not in positive dirt and decay—is the entrance pavilion in the grounds of the British Legation, shown in my illustration. That is a massive wooden roof, richly carved and gorgeously coloured, supported upon many columns correspondingly decorated. One day I was riding with a member of the Russian Legation, and he said, "By the way, wouldn't you like to see the Imperial Chinese War Office?" "Very much indeed," I replied enthusiastically, supposing it to be something splendid. So we turned into a wretched by-street,

and steered our ponies round the mud-holes and the heaps of garbage till we reached it—a broken-down, weather-stained, rotting structure, with a waving field of weeds on the roof, and a guard lounging at the door one degree more dirty and dilapidated than the place itself. And all the other offices of State—the Board of Rites, the Board of Punishments, the Astronomical Board, and the rest—are facsimiles of the Board of War. Professor Douglas says, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, that the halls of the palace, "for the magnificence of their proportions and barbaric splendour, are probably not to be surpassed anywhere." Whatever may be his authority for this statement—I thought no foreigner had ever had an opportunity of examining them—nothing else in Peking suggests any magnificence and splendour. The yellow-roofed buildings of the palace are closely walled in, and no foreign foot passes the threshold of the "Forbidden City"; but I have looked at them through my glass from the top of the highest building in the neighbourhood, and they appear commonplace enough. And when the Emperor recently quitted the palace in great pomp, and after him came the solemn procession of the Records, an experienced eye-witness said of the latter, "Like everything Chinese, it was disappointing, tawdry, and sordid," and added, "It is safe to conjecture that the Emperor's own retinue, could it be seen, would reveal a similar state of affairs." The Temple of Heaven, with its semicircular marble altar and bright blue dome, as you look down upon it from the wall, seems to be in good preservation, and a really impressive and beautiful structure; but not a single other place or thing did I see that suggested the "gorgeous East" in the remotest degree.

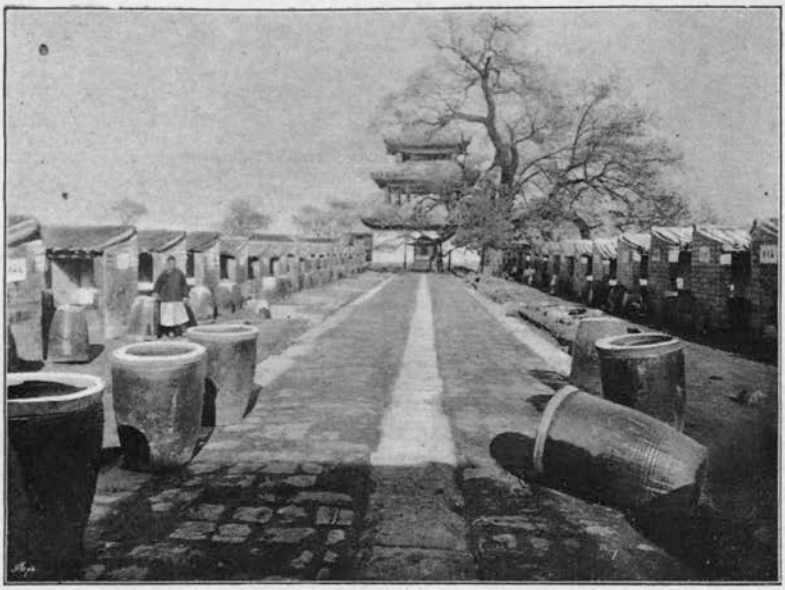
Of interesting places, however, there are certainly a few in Peking. First among these comes the wall itself. It is built of large bricks, filled in with sand, and is fifty feet high, sixty feet wide at the base, and forty feet at the top. Peking, seen from the wall, is a stretch of flat roofs, more than half hidden in foliage, from which here and there a tower or a pagoda or high-

roofed temple projects. Not a trace of the actual dirt and discomfort and squalor is visible; the air is fresh, the smells are absent, and the Celestial capital is at its best. A walk of a mile along the top brings you to the famous Observatory, and the marvellous bronzes of the Jesuit Father Verbiest, who made and erected them in 1668. Below the wall, in a shady garden, are the much older ones which Marco Polo saw, less accurate astronomically, but even more beautiful for their grace and delicacy, and linking one's imagination closely with the romantic past; for this great globe and sextant and armillary zodiacal sphere were constructed in 1279 by the astronomer of Khublai Khan. Either the climate or their own intrinsic excellence has preserved them so well that every line and bit of tracery is as perfect to our eyes as it was to those of the great Khan himself.

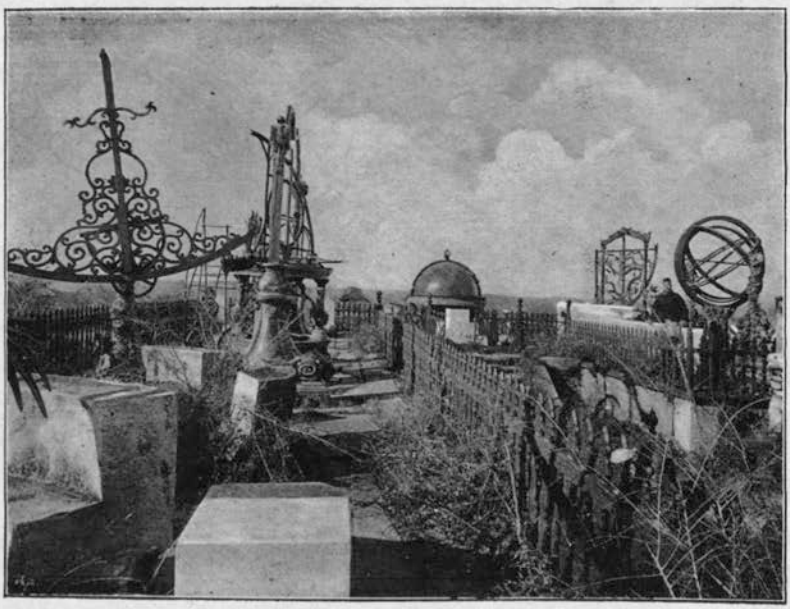
Then there is the Examination Hall. The Government of China is a vast system of competitive examination tempered by bribery, and this *Kao Ch'ang* is its focus. It is a miniature city, with one wide artery down the middle, hundreds of parallel streets running from this on both sides, each street mathematically subdivided into houses, a big semblance of a palace at one end of the main street, and little elevated watch-towers here and there. But the palace is merely the examiners' hall, the streets are three feet wide, and one side of them is a blank wall, the towers are for the "proctors" to spy upon cribbing, and the houses are perfectly plain brick cells measuring 38 inches by 50. In the enclosure there are no fewer than fourteen thousand of these. After emerging successfully from a competitive examination in the capital of his own province, the Chinese aspirant comes to Peking to compete for the second degree. He is put into one of these cells, two boards are given him for a seat and a table, and there he remains day and night for fourteen days. Every cell is full, an army of cooks and coolies waits upon the scholars, and any one caught cribbing or communicating with his neighbour is visited with the severest punishment. The

condition of the place when all these would-be *literati* are thus cooped up for a fortnight, with Chinese ideas of sanitation, may be imagined, and it is not surprising to learn that many die. But what joy for the successful ones! They are received in procession at the gates of their native town, and everybody hastens to congratulate their parents upon having given such a son to the world. By and by there is another examination in which the already twice successful compete against each other, thousands again flock to Peking, and the winners are honoured by the Son of Heaven himself, and their names inscribed for ever upon marble tablets. Better still, they are provided with Government posts, and this is the reward of their efforts. But the subject-matter of their examination is simply and solely the letter-perfect knowledge of the works of Confucius, the history of China, and the art of composition and character-forming as practised by the great masters of old. In the works of the masters, argue the Chinese, is all wisdom; he who knows these works best is therefore the wisest man; whatever needs doing, the wisest man can do it best. So the successful *literati* are sent all over the country to be magistrates and generals and commanders of ships and engineers and everything else haphazard, without the slightest acquaintance of any kind with their subject, densely and marvellously ignorant and impenetrably conceited. An idea of the part this Examination Hall plays in the contemporary life of China may be gained from the fact that in June, 1894, no fewer than 6,896 candidates presented themselves in Peking, of whom 320 were successful, including the son of a well-known Formosa millionaire, who was promptly made Assistant Imperial High Commissioner of Agriculture in Formosa. The Marquis Tsêng was one of the great Chinamen of the present day who did not enter public life by this triple portal to invincible incompetence.

The shrine of the Master himself is really an impressive spot. The great hall and its columns are of bare wood, the floor is of plain stone, and no adornment mars the supreme solemnity of



THE EXAMINATION CELLS, PEKING.



THE OBSERVATORY ON THE WALL, PEKING.

the place. In the middle, upon a square altar, stands a small tablet of red lacquer, upon which is written in Chinese and Manchu, "The tablet of the soul of the most holy ancestral teacher Confucius." Up the marble terrace to this hall the Emperor comes to worship twice a year, and the Chinese do really hold this place in some veneration, for when I offered its miserable guardian five dollars to let me photograph it, he repulsed the offer with much scorn. Yet five dollars would have been a small fortune for him.

One experience of Celestial sight-seeing I am not likely to forget, and should be very unwilling to repeat. Among the places of interest in Peking the *Yung Ho Kung*, the Great Llamaserai or Llama Temple, ranks very high. It is a monastery of Mongol Buddhism or Shamanism, and contains over a thousand Mongol and Thibetan monks ruled over by a "Living Buddha." No foreigner, however, had been in it for several years, as the inmates are a rough and lawless lot, practically beyond the control of the Chinese authorities, and the last party that entered it was rudely handled. It is regarded as all the more sacred, too, because an Emperor was born in one of its temples before they were given to the Llamas. When I spoke of going there both my *mafoo* and "boy" told me that strangers could no longer get in, the former adding that he had accompanied different employers there six times without success. A friend in Peking, however, told me that one of the priests, called the Pai Llama, whatever that may mean, had come to him a few weeks before to borrow five dollars, and had said as an inducement that if he or any of his friends wanted to see the Llamaserai he would take them over it himself without a fee. So my friend gave me his big red Chinese card with the Pai Llama's name on it as an introduction, and a member of the Legation, who spoke Chinese, was good enough to go with me, as he was equally anxious to see the place. It is on the out skirts of Peking, nearly an hour's ride from Legation Street, and we passed in through two or three gates from the street without

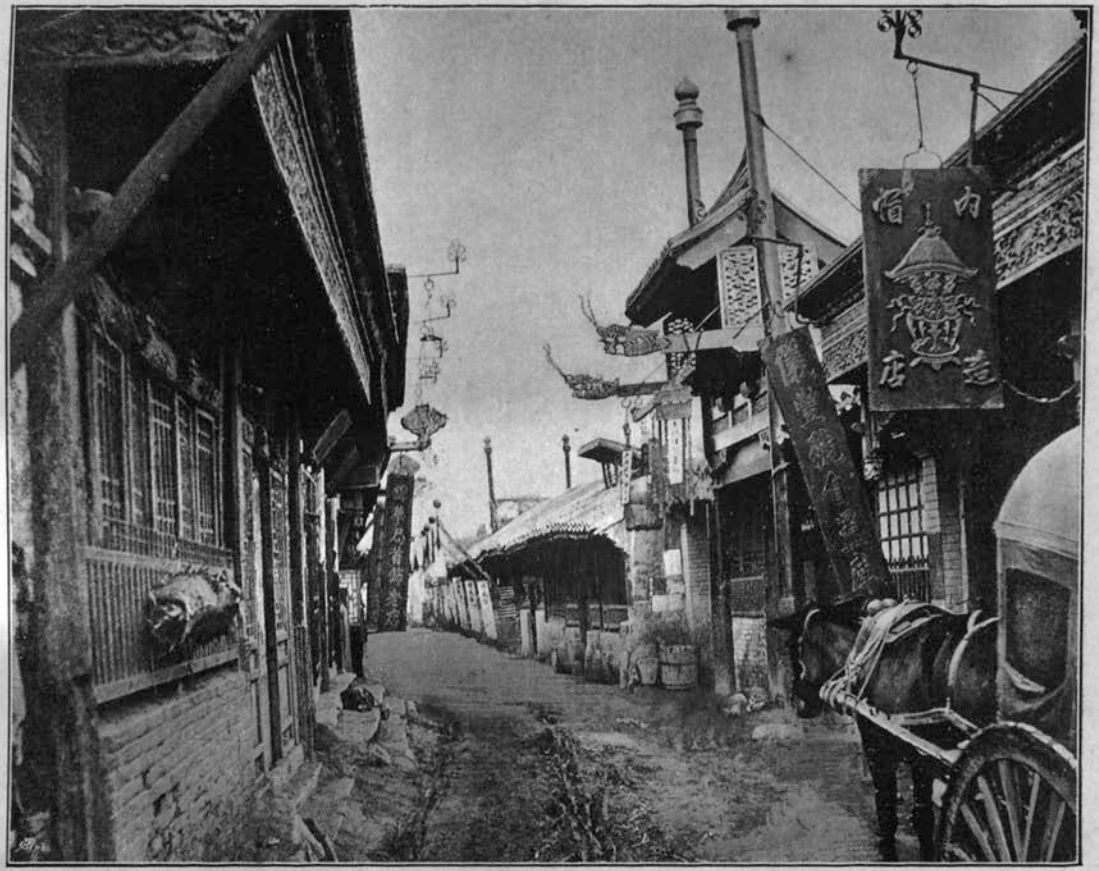
any difficulty. Then some boy-neophytes or acolytes—we knew them from their shaven heads—ran ahead of us and warned the priests, who shut the doors. After a quarter of an hour's colloquy we bribed the doorkeeper to tell the Pai Llama, and by and by the latter appeared, a small dirty individual, who succeeded with much difficulty in persuading the others to open the gates and let us step just inside. Then he immediately disappeared and we saw him no more. After another half-hour of bargaining we agreed to pay them a certain moderate sum to show us the four chief sights of the Temple. The first of these was the great Buddha, a wooden image 70 feet high, richly ornamented and clothed, holding an enormous lotus in each hand, and with the traditional jewel on his breast. In each section of his huge gold crown sat a small Buddha, as perfect and as much ornamented as the great one. His toe measured 21 inches. On each side of him hung a huge scroll 75 feet long, bearing Chinese characters, and a series of galleries, reached by several flights of stairs, surrounded him. The expression of his great bronze face was singularly lofty, and I was seized with a great desire to photograph him. The crowd of monks was outside the locked door, one only entering with us, so I hinted to him that if he permitted me to take a photograph a dollar might be forthcoming. The dollar interested him, but he had no idea what a photograph was. After a while my companion succeeded in explaining what the Chinese call the "shadow-picture," and then he would not hear of it, declaring that the whole temple would instantly fall down if such a thing were attempted. I offered two dollars, three, four, five, ten, and then, my eagerness increasing with the difficulty, twenty. At last he said that for twenty dollars he would agree to smuggle me in next morning to do it, as if any of the other priests knew, there would be trouble. So we passed on to the other sights—two magnificent bronze lions, and a wonderful bronze urn; many temples filled with strange idols, hung with thousands of silk hangings, and laid with Thibetan carpets; all

sorts of bronze and enamel altar utensils, presented by different emperors, among them two elephants in *cloisonné*, said to be the best specimens of such work in China; and the great hall, with its prayer-benches for all the monks, where they worship every afternoon at five. In a couple of hours we had seen everything, and came out again into the central courtyard. Here were already a hundred or more monks waiting for us, all with their heads shaven like billiard-balls, and on the whole a set of as thorough-paced blackguards as could be imagined; filthy, vermin-covered, bloated, scrofulous, and with the marks of nameless vices stamped clearly on many of their faces. "I shall be glad when we are out of this," I remarked, and my companion heartily assented. But easier said than done. They crowded round us with brutal inquisitiveness, pulled us about, shouted to us, and laughed grossly as half-rational gorillas might do. My companion said to them that we were very much pleased with our visit, and we slowly edged toward the door. But there seemed to be a sort of tacit conspiracy to crowd us in any other direction. They did not actually oppose us, but somehow we could not get there. It was as though they did not like to let us get away, yet were conscious that they had no excuse for detaining us. After a quarter of an hour of this we began to get annoyed. Just then we all came to a sort of tunnel gate in a wall, leading from one court to another, my companion and one crowd first, I and another crowd afterwards, and my "boy" and a third crowd last. As I was passing, a man whom I took from his dress to be a sort of doorkeeper sprang out and addressed me volubly. Not understanding him I took no notice, when he grasped my arm to detain me. I shook him off and was passing on when suddenly he seized me by the collar with both hands and flung me violently back against the wall. At such a moment one does not reflect upon consequences, and I did what anybody else would have done. The moment his grasp quitted my collar I struck him. He recovered himself, and the misunderstanding

was about to be prolonged vigorously on both sides when a very old priest in a fine yellow robe emerged from a doorway and began to play the peacemaker with many smiles, holding us each by the hand. A second's reflection showed me the extreme folly of getting into a quarrel in such a place, so I responded effusively to the venerable Llama's overtures, and, calling my "boy," bade him explain that if the priest had anything to say to us we should be very glad to hear it, but that if he laid a finger on us he would get into trouble. As we were two, and they were upwards of two hundred by this time, I have wondered since that the ludicrous side of this did not strike them. However, as I followed up the remark with a few small coins, nobody cared to impugn the logic.

As soon as I overtook my companion I saw from the movement of the crowd that something was wrong, and when I forced my way into the middle it was evidently a much more serious affair than mine. A young brute of a monk had approached him from behind and suddenly and violently kicked him. In return he had received a good cut across the face from a riding-whip. The monk was foaming with rage, and rapidly stripping off all his upper clothing with a most unmistakable intention. Already he was nearly half-naked, and although perhaps a trifle fat, still an ugly customer to handle. "He struck me with his whip!" he exclaimed, pointing to the mark on his face, and then followed a string of remarks levelled at us. "What does he say?" I asked. "He says we sha'n't get out alive." Just then a monk shouted something which the others eagerly echoed, and a dozen of them instantly ran and shut the great gates of the courtyard.

There was no doubt whatever that we were in a very tight place. We were in the centre of probably the most dangerous place in Peking, on the outskirts of the city, a quarter of a mile from the street, with half a dozen closed gates between us and it, and completely at the mercy of two hundred savage Mongols and Thibetans, who had vowed to have our lives. There were a



A Street in Peking.

thousand of them within call, they acknowledge no Chinese authority whatever, the Chinese Government would be extremely loath to interfere with them for fear of provoking trouble in Thibet, and if they had just knocked us on the head and hid our bodies in one of their temple dens, we should very probably never have been heard of again. Clearly the only thing to do was to get out of the place at any cost. Then I called my "boy," who was yelling and struggling to keep possession of my two cameras, and told him to ask quietly the best-looking of the monks for how much they would consent to let us go out. All this took but half a minute to do, and as soon as the crowd heard the question the pugilistic gentleman was squelched by common consent. "Fifty dollars" was the conclusion arrived at after several minutes' discussion. "Tell them we have not so much money with us, but they can come and get it from my house to-morrow morning." But they were much too wary to fall into such a palpable trap. To bring the story to an end, however, at last my "boy" made a bargain with them, and we were fleeced of several dollars at each gate that they could manage to lead us through before we reached the street and our horses. I got through the gate all right, and my "boy" was following when several of the monks precipitated themselves on him and sent him flying head first into the middle of the street, while the broken camera, tripod, and bag of double-backs landed each in a separate mud-hole.

That afternoon as I was mending my camera the "boy" came in with the tea. "Master?" "Well?" "I no go Llama Temple any more—belong velly bad man!" And I did not keep my appointment next morning to photograph the big Buddha furtively.

Above all other characteristics of Peking one thing stands out in horrible prominence. Not to mention it would be wilfully to omit the most striking feature of the place. I mean its filth. It is the most horribly and indescribably filthy place that can be

imagined. Indeed imagination must fall far short of the fact. Some of the daily sights of the pedestrian in Peking could hardly be more than hinted at by one man to another in the disinfecting atmosphere of a smoking-room. There is no sewer or cesspool, public or private, but the street; the dog, the pig, and the fowl—in a sickening succession—are the scavengers; every now and then you pass a man who goes along tossing the most loathsome of the refuse into an open-work basket on his back; the smells are simply awful; the city is one colossal and uncleansed *cloaca*. As I have said above, the first of the two moments of delight vouchsafed to every visitor to the Celestial capital is at his first sight of it. The second is when he turns his back, hoping it may be for ever, upon "the body and soul-stinking town" (the words are Coleridge's) of Peking.

CHAPTER XIV.

TO THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA.

THE first time I met a camel-train near Peking I reined up my pony and feasted my eyes upon it. And although I saw hundreds afterwards, I found them just as amusing as ever. The two-humped or Bactrian camels of Northern China are much bigger than those we know at home, and I have seen few sights so picturesque as a string of them approaching over these brown plains. A score are fastened together by a cord attaching the nose of one to the tail of the other; a bell, a couple of feet long, is hung round the neck of the last, to warn the driver in front by its ceasing if the line breaks anywhere; a medley of bales and boxes and clothing is slung on their backs; ruddy-faced Mongols, dressed in scarlet and yellow, with ornaments of gold and silver in profusion, sit up aloft and smile at you as you pass; the great shaggy beasts step softly along, ingeniously out of step, lifting their sponge-like feet and dropping them again with perfect and unvarying deliberation, the whole train moving with the silence of a dream, broken only by the *jang-jang* of the solitary bell. Their big brown eyes look you straight in the face, and there is something pathetic and reproachful in their glance. All day long, one street of Peking is filled with these picturesque processions, gaunt, wretched creatures, with worn-out coats and covered with coal-dust, carrying sacks of coal from the Western Hills into Peking; and far finer and better-kept animals bearing tea away up into the North. During all my stay in Peking I longed for the moment when I

too should ride away at dawn toward Mongolia, in the worn tracks of these strange beasts and their merry masters.

My pony was a little creature not much bigger than a dog, with a white coat as long and thick as a Polar bear's. The *mafoo* had bought him a few days before from a Mongol for twenty taels, and he had never had a foreign saddle and bridle on till I mounted him. Therefore the all-day ride was not so monotonous as usual, and for the first five miles it was even exciting. We started at daybreak and the sun was well above us before we got outside the two gates of Peking. Then the *mafoo* took the lead. Once in the open country we were on a great alluvial plain, dotted with mud houses, broken up by irregular patches of verdure and cultivation, laced in all directions by dozens of bridle-paths, and ending on our left in the dim outline of the Western Hills, the summer sanitarium of Peking. We plunged into the labyrinth of roads, and the *mafoo* threaded his way among them without a moment's hesitation. Afterwards I found that he had been over them forty-six times before, but for my own part I could see hardly any signs by which to distinguish one from another. Till eleven o'clock we trotted steadily on, reaching then a small town called Sha-ho, where we stopped an hour for rest and tiffin. Here already foreigners are scarce and I was the centre of much curiosity, keen and inquisitive, but quite good-natured. Crossing a river over two very old broad flat bridges of white marble, built curiously at an obtuse angle to each other, we emerged again into the plain. This grew more and more uneven as we advanced, till at last we were riding along a narrow path on the sloping stony bank of a dry water-course. The stones grew bigger and more numerous, till they could no longer be safely negociated, and then my guide struck up to the right, and an hour's detour across country, with half a mile of such bad going at the end that I got off and led my pony, brought us at three o'clock to the fortified city of Nan-k'ou, thirty miles from Peking, our resting-place for the night.

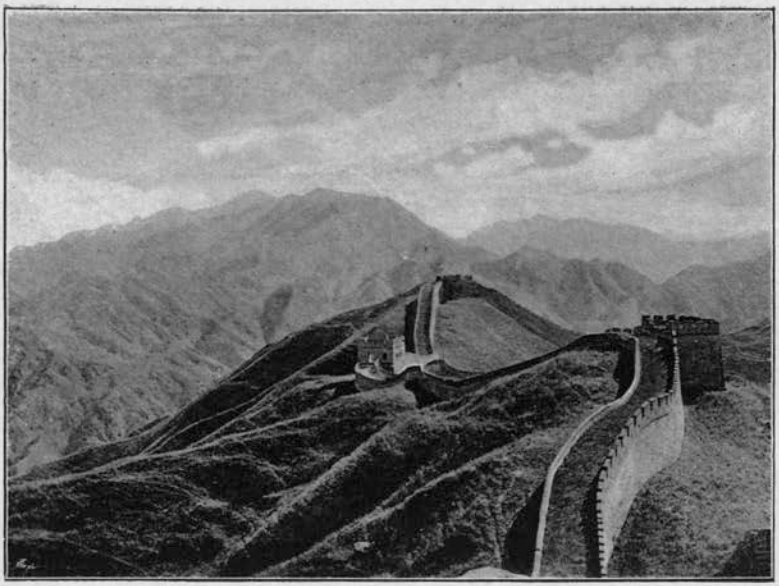
Nan-k'ou is a very interesting little place. Its wall is in ruins, but that only makes it the more picturesque. On the hills right and left of the entrance to the pass which the city is supposed to guard, are two sprightly little towers; a dozen others are just visible dotted about the chain of hills around it. Its one broad street, paved once with great blocks of stone, now worn away and upset till a pony can hardly make his way at all over their slippery rolling surface, is crowded with traffic of men and beasts, and every fifty yards a wide arched doorway leads into a spacious inn-yard. This street is part of the great commercial highway between China and all her neighbours of the North. Through it a constant stream of camels and ponies and donkeys and even laden coolies passes, bringing Mongol produce to Peking, and taking brick-tea back from Tientsin to Kiakhta on the Russian frontier. And through this street this stream has passed for who knows how many years—thousands, at any rate.

I strolled along it and turned into one of the gateways. But I had only just time to step aside when a drove of at least a hundred ponies suddenly stampeded through it and galloped headlong through the street, whinnying and kicking up their heels in delight at being free. Just outside the city they drank greedily at a little stream, and then rolled over and over each other in the dirt. But such a spectacle of cruelty to animals as was afforded by the state of their backs I have never seen. Not one of them was without a large raw wound on each side, and half of them had horrible, deep, bleeding, festering sores bigger than two hands. The sight was sickening, and nothing whatever was done for them except that afterwards I saw a coolie beating the insides of the rough pack-saddles with a stick to keep the blood-soaked places from getting quite hard. Each pony had carried two bales of tea, as hard as blocks of granite. I tried the weight of one and found I could just raise it off the ground. Therefore the ponies were shockingly overloaded.

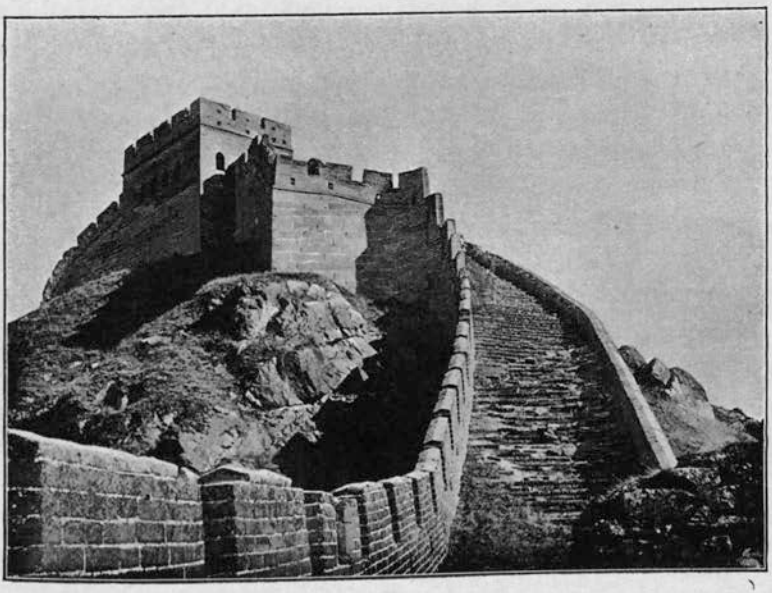
The camels require so much space for themselves and their

burdens that they have special caravanserais. Their saddles, with the loads deposited on each side, are arranged in regular rows, like game after a battue, and the animals betake themselves to a trough which runs all round the yard, squeezing close together. The yard of a caravanserai at feeding-time therefore exhibits a complete circular horizon of camels' tails. When they have eaten they sink down and very deliberately chew the cud. It is just as well to keep on good terms with a camel, for when he is standing up he can swing his hind leg like a pendulum in an arc of about twenty feet and therefore deliver a kick which would break in the door of a San Francisco gambling-den; while when he is lying down he can always spare a couple of gallons of cud to spit at an enemy. I saw a Mongol driver to whom this had happened, and the sight was unpleasant and instructive. Several hundred camels shared the hospitality of Nan-k'ou with me that night.

Next morning we embarked upon little white donkeys, the pass being impracticable for ponies. This road in its glory is said to have been paved with great smooth granite blocks; now in the valley it is a broken mass of rough stones in a river bed, through which a shallow stream runs; while during the ascent and at the height of the pass it is a bad mountain road obstructed by great masses of rock. A couple of hours' riding and walking brought us to another walled town called Chu-yung-kuan, famous for a heavy arched stone gateway, the whole inside of which is covered with sculptures in low relief and a Buddhist inscription in six languages—Chinese, Thibetan, Mongol, Sanscrit, and two others that I could not get any one to identify. From the other side of this gateway the pass of Nan-k'ou is spread out before you, a brown, barren, rock-strewn, gloomy valley, rising and narrowing till it disappears in the hills, through which an endless file of brown camels is slowly passing, filling the air with the dust of their feet and the clangour of their bells. For an hour or more we jogged on. Then when the pass had become wearisome and I was thousands of miles away in thought, my *mafoo* rode



THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA.



A WATCH-TOWER ON THE GREAT WALL

up beside me and silently pointed to the hill-top on the right. I strained my eyes, and there, sure enough, the sky-line far away was broken by the crenellated outline of the Great Wall itself. "This," said Marco Polo when he saw it, "is the country of Gog and Magog."

The Great Wall of China is, after all, only a wall. And it was built with the same object as every other wall—to keep people from coming where they were not wanted. Mr. Toole's famous account of it is as historically accurate as any. "The most important building in China," he is accustomed to say, "is the Chinese Wall, built to keep the Tartars out. It was built at such an enormous expense that the Chinese never got over it. But the Tartars did. And the way they accomplished this feat was as follows: one went first and t'other went arter." It differs from other walls in only two respects, its age and its size. It was built by the great Emperor Chi Hwang-ti, who came to the throne in B.C. 221, to keep back the Mongolian hordes, and was called by him the "Red Fort." The original wall is 1,400 miles long and stretches from far Kansu to Shan-hai-kwan on the gulf of Pe-chih-li, the present terminus of China's solitary railway—from Tientsin. This wall, however, is neither so well built nor so large as that which I am describing, the latter being a five-hundred mile erection, dating from several hundred years later. It is, however, an integral part—and the most impressive—of the "Great Wall." Besides its age it enjoys the reputation of being the only work of human hands on the globe visible from the moon. The Chinese name for it is *Wan-li-ch'ang-ch'êng*, "the rampart ten thousand *li* long." And the gate on this highway is called *Pa-ta-ling* and is about fifty miles north-west of Peking and 2,000 feet above the sea. Beyond it lies Mongolia.

Half an hour after this first glimpse I stood upon the wall itself. The gateway is a large double one, with a square tower upon it, pierced with oblong openings for cannon, of which a dozen old ones lie in a heap, showing that at one time the road

was seriously defended at this point. A rough stairway leads to the top, which is about twenty feet wide, with a crenellated parapet on each side, and you can walk along it as far as you can see, with here and there a scramble where it has fallen in a little. On the whole it is in excellent repair, having of course been mended and rebuilt many times. Every half-mile or so is a little square tower of two storeys. The wall itself varies a good deal in height according to the nature of the ground, averaging probably about forty feet. On one side Mongolia, as you see it, is a vast undulating brown plain; on the other side China is a perfect sea of brown hills in all directions, and across these stretches the Great Wall. On the hill-top, through the valleys, up and down the sides it twists in an unbroken line, exactly like a huge earth-worm suddenly turned to stone. For many miles it is visible in both directions, and when you can no longer trace its entire length you can still discover it topping the hills one after another into the remote distance. And as you reflect that it is built of bricks, in almost inaccessible places, through uninhabited countries; that each brick must have been transported on a man's shoulders enormous distances; and that it extends for 2,000 miles, or one-twelfth of the circumference of the globe, you begin to realise that you are looking upon the most colossal achievement of human hands. The bricks are so big and heavy that I had to hire a little donkey to carry off two of them. This is the only piece of vandalism to which I plead guilty during years of tempting Eastern travel, but the temptation was irresistible and "they never will be missed." Nowadays, of course, the wall serves no defensive purpose whatever, and is not guarded in any way. Not a soul lives within miles of it at most points, and it is but a landmark for the Mongols' camel-trains, a stupendous monument to the past of China, and an evidence of Celestial greatness and enterprise gone never to return.

After taking a dozen photographs, several of which are here reproduced, and reflecting how comical now were the

learned arguments produced in England a few years ago to prove that there was no such thing as a Great Wall of China, I turned back to Nan-k'ou, reaching there at nightfall. Next morning before daylight we started for the tombs of the great Ming dynasty, thirteen miles away, and as famous in China as the wall itself. These lie in a pleasant green valley surrounded with an almost complete circle of high wooded hills—an ideal spot for an emperor's grave. There are thirteen of them, called the *Shih-san-ling*, disposed in the shape of a crescent, but the crescent is so extensive that only four or five of them can be seen at once. I visited the largest, the tomb of Yung-le, who brought his court hither in 1411. A square of perhaps two hundred yards across the face is surrounded with a high wall of plain red brick. The side of the hill forms the fourth side, and the entrance is through a pair of ordinary wooden doors. When you enter, the spectacle is not at all striking. There are a few little pavilions on either side of you, each covering a carved stone tortoise or an inscribed tablet, and in front a long low temple-shaped building with an approach of steps and balustrades in carved white marble. Inside is gloom, through which you faintly discern the magnificent outlines of thirty-two enormous wooden columns, each a solid log of hewn and polished teak twelve feet round and thirty-two feet high. Where they came from—unless it was from Burmah—or how they were conveyed hither, nobody knows, but their grandeur is indisputable. In the centre, upon a sort of stone table, stands a plain tablet of red lacquer, a couple of feet high and a foot wide, bearing the posthumous title of Yung-le, "The perfect ancestor and literary Emperor." But the ancestor himself is not here. Passing out behind the great columns and again crossing the garden, at the edge of the hillside there is a solid square tower of brick and granite, supporting a kind of obelisk. The sarcophagus itself is deep in the hill, and upon the obelisk a long inscription narrates the deeds and extols the virtues of the long-departed Ming. On the whole, however,

China disappoints you here once more, as everywhere and always. The situation is finely chosen for the last resting-place of immortal emperors, but man's handiwork rather weakens than enhances the effects of nature. There is no suggestion, for instance, of the solemnity of that cathedral aisle—

> "Where the warriors in the gloom
> Watch o'er Maximilian's tomb;"

and there is nothing to arrest the hasty footstep lest even "the hushed tread"—

> "Should burst the bands of the dreamless sleep
> That holds the mighty dead."

As you ride away you pass through an avenue of stone carvings, where pairs of knights and courtiers, with camels and elephants —beasts fit to follow their master into the shadow-world— glare at you from each side. They are enormous, being some fifteen feet high and carved out of a solid block of stone; and wonderful, for you cannot imagine how they were transported. But they are utterly dwarfed by the hills around them, and soon your only recollection of them is that your pony positively refused to pass between them and ended by bolting with you. And I may as well give my little Polar bear of a pony credit for the way in which he trotted back to Peking so as to get there before the gates closed, in all forty miles in four hours, with three-quarters of an hour for rest and food. I have known costlier horseflesh make poorer progress. And when we got back again at last to Tientsin my *mafoo* sold him to the inn-keeper for twice what he had paid for him.

CHAPTER XV.

CHINESE HORRORS.

TO understand contemporary China it is absolutely necessary to undergo, either personally or by proxy, some very unpleasant experiences. This must be my excuse for the following chapter. China is claiming her place among the nations of the world. The question, What shall that place be? can only be answered by those who know what China is. I have looked upon men being cruelly tortured; I have stood in the shambles where human beings are slaughtered like pigs; my boots have dripped with the blood of my fellow-creatures;—repulsive as all this is, it is one of the most significant and instructive aspects of the real China, as opposed to the China of native professions and foreign imagination, and therefore it must be frankly described.

It was in Canton, a colossal human ant-hill, an endless labyrinth of streets a dozen feet wide and a score high, crowded from daylight to dark with a double stream of men and women, exactly like the double stream between an ant-hill and a carcase. All this mass of humanity was presided over for years by H.E. Chang Chi-tung, now Viceroy of the Hu Kuang provinces, the most independent and foreigner-hating Viceroy in China, and therefore it may be imagined what is the temper of the populace, especially as the Cantonese are the most turbulent people of the Flowery Kingdom.

During the day the streets of Canton are in semi-obscurity, as they are closed in at the top by broad strips of cloth and long

advertising streamers; but at night they are as black as Tartarus. Public safety and order are supposed to be preserved by occasional posts of soldiers, with a collection of weapons and instruments of torture hung up outside to strike terror into the evilly-disposed. But, as may be imagined, crime of every kind is rife in Canton, and so bad is the reputation of the place that very often a servant from another part of China, travelling with his master, will rather forfeit his situation than accompany him there. And where the crime is, there is the punishment too. It by no means follows in China that the person punished is the criminal, but there is enough legal cruelty in Canton to glut an Alva. Respect for the presence of an occasional foreigner causes a good deal of it to be hid, and the spectacle of a man hung up in a cage to starve to death in public is therefore not seen there as it is in other parts.

The magistrate sat in his Yamên dispensing justice. He was a benevolent-looking man of perhaps forty, with an intellectual forehead and the conventional enormous pair of spectacles. He glanced up at us as we entered, visibly annoyed at the intrusion and hardly returning our salutation. But as we were under the wing of a consul for whom Chinese officialism has no terrors whatever, a fact of which the Cantonese authorities have had repeated experience, we made ourselves quite at home. There was little of the pomp of Western law in the scene before us. The magistrate's own chair, draped with red cloth covered with inscriptions in large characters, was almost the only piece of official apparatus, and behind it were grouped half-a-dozen of the big red presentation umbrellas of which every Chinese official is so proud. Before him was a large open space and a motley crowd, in which the most conspicuous figures were the filthy ruffians in red hats, known as "Yamên-runners," whose business is to clear a way before their master in the streets and do anything else that he wishes, down to the administration of torture. The magistrate himself sat perfectly silent, writing busily, while several persons before him gabbled all at the same

A Magistrate's Yamên.

time. These were presumably the plaintiff, the defendant, and the policemen. After a while the magistrate interrupted one of the speakers with a monosyllable spoken in a low tone without even raising his head, but its effect was magical. The crowd fell back, and one of the little group in front of the chair wrung his hands and heaved a theatrical sigh. Before we could realise what had happened, several pairs of very willing hands were helping him to let down his trousers, and when this was accomplished to the satisfaction of everybody he laid himself face downwards on the floor. Then one of the "runners" stepped forward with the bamboo, a strip of this toughest of plants three feet long, two inches wide, and half an inch thick. Squatting by the side of the victim and holding the bamboo perfectly horizontal close to the flesh, he began to rain light blows on the man's buttocks. At first the performance looked like a farce, the blows were so light and the receiver of them so indifferent. But as the shower of taps continued with monotonous persistence I bethought me of the old torture of driving a man mad by letting a drop of water fall every minute on his shaved head. After a few more minutes of the dactylic rap-tap-tap, rap-tap-tap, a deep groan broke from the prisoner's lips. I walked over to look at him and saw that his flesh was blue under the flogging. Then it became congested with blood, and whereas at first he had lain quiet of his own accord, now a dozen men were holding him tight. The crowd gazed at him with broad grins on their faces, breaking out from time to time into a suppressed "Hi-yah," as he writhed in special pain or cried out in agony. And all this time the ceaseless shower of blows continued, the man who wielded the bamboo putting not a particle more or less force into the last stroke than into the first. At length the magistrate dropped another word and the torture stopped as suddenly as it had begun, the prisoner was lifted to his feet and led across the court to lean against the wall. For obvious reasons he could not be "accommodated with a chair."

The next person to be called up was a policeman. The magistrate put a question or two to him and listened patiently for a while to his rambling and effusive replies. Then as before the fatal monosyllable dropped from his lips. With the greatest promptitude the policeman prepared himself, assumed the regulation attitude, and the flagellation began again. But I noticed that the blows sounded altogether different from before, much sharper and shriller, like wood falling upon wood, rather than wood falling upon flesh. So I drew near to examine. Sure enough, there was a vital difference. The policeman had attached a small piece of wood to his leg by means of wax, and on this the blows fell, taking no more effect upon his person than if they had been delivered on the sole of his boot. The fraud was perfectly transparent — everybody in the room, including the magistrate himself, must have known what was happening. Thus another peculiarity of Chinese justice is evidently that the punishment of an ordinary offender is one thing, while that of an erring official is quite another. I learned that the policeman was ordered to be bambooed for not bringing in a prisoner whom the magistrate had ordered him to produce. When the sham punishment was over he jumped briskly to his feet, adjusted his clothing, and resumed his duties about the court.

While we had been watching the process of "eating bamboo," far different punishments were going on in another part of the court-room unnoticed by us. The bamboo is not so very far removed from still existent civilised deterrent methods, but what was now before us recalled the most brutal ages. In one corner a man had been tied hand and foot on a small bench the length of his back, in such a manner that his body was bent as far back as it could possibly be stretched in the form of a circle, his back resting on the flat seat of the bench, and his arms and legs fastened to the four legs. Then the whole affair, man and bench, had been tilted forward till it rested upon two feet and upon the man's two knees, almost falling over—almost, but not

quite. This, as well as the bambooing and other tortures, is illustrated in the native drawings here produced. The position of the miserable wretch was as grotesque as it was exquisitely painful; his hands and feet were blue, his eyes protruded, his mouth gasped convulsively like that of a dying fish, and he had evidently been in that position so long that he was on the eve of losing consciousness. And he was apparently forgotten. A few boys stood gazing at him open-mouthed, but nobody else paid any more attention to him than if he had been a piece of furniture. This was enough for my companions, and they left the room. But how is the Western world to know what the Celestial Empire really is unless people are willing to see and hear of its innumerable horrors? The utterly mistaken notion of China which is so wide-spread at home is due in great part to this very unwillingness to look straight in the face what a French writer has so well called the "rotten East."

In another corner an unfortunate creature was undergoing the punishment called "kneeling on chains." A thin strong cord had been fastened to his thumbs and great toes and passed over a hook in an upright post. Then by pulling it sufficiently he was of course lifted off the ground, his knees being the lowest part of his body. Under them a small chain, with sharp-edged links, had next been coiled in a circle as a natty sailor coils a rope on the deck. The cord had then been slackened till the whole weight of the man rested upon his knees, and his knees rested upon the chain. The process seems simple, but the result is awful. And this man had been undergoing a prolonged course of torture. Amongst other things, his ankle-bones had been battered with a piece of wood shaped like a child's cricket bat. His tortures ended for the moment while we were looking at him. Two attendants loosened the cord, and he fell in a heap. They rolled him off the chain and set him on his feet. The moment they let go he sank like a half-filled sack. So they stretched him out on the floor

and each one of them rubbed one of his knees vigorously for a couple of minutes. But it was no use, he was utterly incapable of even standing, and had to be dragged away. As we passed out, a woman was before the magistrate, giving evidence. Her testimony, however, was either not true enough or not prompt enough, in the official's opinion, for he had recourse to the "truth-compeller." This is a little instrument reserved exclusively for the fair sex, shaped exactly like the thick sole of a slipper, split at the sole part and fastened at the heel. With this the witness received a slap across the mouth which rang out like a pistol-shot. A glance at the frontispiece of this volume, which is a facsimile of a native drawing professing to be a perfectly truthful representation of a common method of torturing women, will show that this woman was more fortunate than many of her sex in China.

It is only fair to add that the Chinese have a sort of rational theory of torture, although they are far from adhering to it. By Chinese law no prisoner can be punished until he has confessed his guilt. Therefore they first prove him guilty and then torture him until he confesses the accuracy of their verdict. The more you reflect on this logic the more surprising it becomes. To assist in its comprehension I procured, by the aid of the Consul and a few dollars, a complete set of instruments of torture—light bamboo, heavy bamboo, ankle-smasher, mouth-slapper, thumb-squeezer, and sundry others. "Mandarins," says Professor Douglas, "whose minds have grown callous to the sufferings of their fellow-creatures, are always ready to believe that the instruments of torture at their disposal are insufficient for their purposes. Unhappily, it is always easy to inflict pain; and in almost every yamun throughout the Empire an infinite variety of instruments of torture is in constant use."

One Chinese punishment, of which I am fortunately able to give a striking picture, deserves particular attention. This is *ling-chi*, or death by the "thousand cuts." It is otherwise

known as death by the "slow process" or by the "slicing process." It is supposed to be reserved for culprits who commit triple murder and for parricides, but the penal code is no doubt as elastic in this as in other respects. Here is a specimen announcement of *ling-chi*, from the official *Pekin Gazette*:—

"Ma Pei-yao, Governor of Kuangsi, reports a triple poisoning case in his province. A woman having been beaten by her husband on account of her slovenly habits, took counsel with an old herb woman, and by her direction picked some poisonous herb on the mountain, with which she successively poisoned her husband, father-in-law, and brother-in-law. She has been executed by the slow process.—*Rescript: Let the Board of Punishments take note.*"

The criminal is fastened to a rough cross, and the executioner, armed with a sharp knife, begins by grasping handfuls from the fleshy parts of the body, such as the thighs and the breasts, and slicing them off. After this he removes the joints and the excrescences of the body one by one—the nose and ears, fingers and toes. Then the limbs are cut off piecemeal at the wrists and the ankles, the elbows and knees, the shoulders and hips. Finally, the victim is stabbed to the heart and his head cut off. Of course, unless the process is very rapidly carried out, the man is dead before it is completed, but if he has any friends who are able to bribe the executioner he is either drugged beforehand with opium, or else the stab to the heart is surreptitiously given after the first few strokes. It would be easy to quote from the *Pekin Gazette* dozens of instances of the infliction of this penalty, and these would probably be but a fraction of the occasions on which it is practised. I believe it has only been witnessed once by a foreigner, as the Chinese have a great and not unnatural objection to the presence of foreigners on such occasions. The photograph here produced is no doubt the only one ever taken. A few words of explanation concerning it are therefore desirable. The British captain of a river steamer plying between Hongkong and Canton strolled one day into the native city with a small hand-camera which he had just purchased. Observing a crowd in the street, he made his way through it and discovered the remains of a man who had been

executed by the *ling-chi*. As his camera was a very small one, he was able to point it at the spectacle and snap the shutter without attracting attention, as the bystanders would never have allowed a formal photograph to be taken. On his return to Hongkong he placed his camera in the hands of an experienced photographer, who developed the negative and made from it an enlargement of which this illustration is a copy. It is thus a unique and absolutely genuine illustration of contemporary Chinese life. The susceptible reader will doubtless be grateful to me for having caused the edge of this picture to be perforated.

It is, however, the last act of the drama of Chinese justice that is the great revelation. I am inclined to think that nobody can claim to have an adequate and accurate appreciation of Chinese character who has not witnessed a Chinese execution. This is not difficult to do at Canton, or even at Kowloon, on the other side of Hongkong harbour, for the Canton river swarms with pirates, and when these gentry are caught they generally get short shrift. A few bambooings to begin with, then several months in prison—and it is not necessary to explain what a Chinese prison is—with little to eat and a stiff course of torture, and then one fine morning a "short sharp shock" at the execution-ground. If the reader cares to accompany me further I will try to place the scene before him.

The execution is fixed for half-past four, so at four the guide comes for us at Shameen, the foreign quarter of Canton, and our chairs carry us rapidly through the noisy alleys of the native city. Until we get close to the spot there is no sign of anything unusual. There suddenly we run into a jammed crowd at the end of a long and particularly narrow street. The chair coolies, however, plunge straight into it and it gives way before us till we are brought up by a huge pair of wooden gates guarded by a little group of soldiers. To hear these men talk you would suppose that they would die then and there rather than let you pass, but the production of a couple of ten-cent pieces works a

CHINA: "DEATH BY THE THOUSAND CUTS."

[*This page is perforated at the side in order that it may be detached, without mutilating the volume, by any reader who prefers not to retain permanently so unpleasant an illustration of the condition of contemporary China.*]

miracle and they open the gates for us, vainly trying to stop the rush of natives that follows and carries us before it right into the middle of the open space. It is a bare piece of ground, fifty yards long by a dozen wide, between two houses, whose blank walls hem it in on three sides. To-day it is the execution ground; yesterday and to-morrow the drying-ground of a potter who lives there. There is no platform, no roped-off space, nothing but this bare bit of dirty ground so crowded with Chinese that we are forced into the middle, not more than four feet from whatever is to take place. It is useless to try to get further off—here we are and here we must stop.

Suddenly the gates are thrown open again, and welcomed by a howl of delight from the crowd, a strange and ghastly procession comes tumbling in. First a few ragamuffin soldiers, making a fine pretence of clearing the way. Then a file of coolies carrying the victims in small shallow baskets slung to bamboo poles. As soon as each pair reaches the middle of the space they stoop and pitch their living burden out and run off. The prisoners are chained hand and foot and are perfectly helpless. The executioner stands by and points out where each load is to be dumped. He is dressed exactly like any other coolie present, without any badge of office whatever. The condemned men have each a long folded piece of paper in a slit bamboo stuck into his pigtail; upon this is written his crime and the warrant of execution. One after another they arrive and are slung out. Will the procession never end? how many can there be? this is perhaps more than we bargained for. At last over the heads of the crowd we see the hats of two petty mandarins, and behind them the gates are shut. The tale of men is fifteen, and the executioner has arranged them in two rows, about two yards apart and all facing one way. All except one seem perfectly callous, and he had probably been drugged with opium, a last privilege which a prisoner's friends can always obtain by bribery. They exchange remarks, some of them evidently chaff, with the spectators, and one man was carried in

singing and kept up his strain almost to the last. The executioners—there are now two of them—step forward. The younger tucks up his trousers and sleeves and deliberately selects a sword from several lying close by, while the other, an older man, collects the strips of paper into a sheaf and lays them on one side. Then he places himself behind the front man of the nearest row and takes him by the shoulders. The younger man walks forward and stands at the left of the kneeling man. The fatal moment has come. There is an instant's hush and every man in the two rows of condemned men behind twists his head up and cranes his neck to see. I will not attempt to describe the emotions of such a moment—the horror, the awful repulsion, the wish that you had never come, the sickening fear that you will be splashed with the blood, and yet the helpless fascination that keeps your eyes glued to every detail. The knife is raised. It is a short broad-bladed, two-handed sword, widest at the point, weighted at the back and evidently as sharp as a razor.

For a second it is poised in the air, as the executioner takes aim. Then it falls. There is no great apparent effort. It simply falls, and moreover seems to fall slowly. But when it comes to the man's neck it does not stop, it keeps falling. With ghastly slowness it passes right through the flesh and you are only recalled from your momentary stupor when the head springs forward and rolls over and over, while for a fraction of a second two dazzling jets of scarlet blood burst out and fall in a graceful curve to the ground. Then the great rush of blood comes and floods the spot. As soon as the blow has fallen the second executioner pitches the body forward with a "Hough!" It tumbles in a shapeless heap, and from every throat goes up a loud "Ho!" expressive of pleasure and approval of the stroke.

But there is no pause, the executioner steps over the corpse to the front man in the second rank, the knife rises again, it falls, another head rolls away, another double burst of blood follows, the headless body is shoved forward, the assistant shouts

CHINESE JUDICIAL TORTURES. (*From Native Drawings*

"Hough!" and the crowd shouts "Ho!" Two men are dead. Then the headsman steps back to the second man of the front row and the operation is repeated.

Two things strike you: the brutal matter-of-factness of the whole performance, and the extraordinary ease with which a human head can be chopped off. As a whole it is precisely like a drove of pigs driven into the shambles and stuck; and in detail it is—or seems—no more difficult than splitting a turnip with a hoe or lopping off a thistle with a cane. Chop, chop, chop—the heads roll off one after the other in as many seconds. When the seventh man is reached, either because the knife is blunted or the executioner misses his blow, the neck is only cut half through. But still he does not stop. He comes quickly back, takes another knife, passes on to the next man, and only comes back to finish the wretched seventh when all the other heads are lying in bloody pools in front of the shoulders which carried them a few moments before. And every man has watched the death of all those in front of him with a horrid animal-like curiosity, and then bent his own neck to the knife. The place is ankle-deep in blood, the spectators are yelling with delight and frenzy, the heads are like bowls on a green, the horrible headless bodies are lying all about in ghastly grotesque attitudes, the executioner is scarlet to the knees and his hands are dripping. Take my word for it that by this time you are feeling very sick.

Fortunately you are not detained long. The moment the last head is off, the crowd is gone with a rush, except a score of urchins who begin skylarking with the bodies and pushing each other into the blood. The bodies are thrown into a pond and the heads are plastered up in big earthenware jars and stacked up with those already round the wall of this potter's field. I had a few minutes' conversation with the executioner afterwards. Decapitation, he told me, was not the occupation of his family; it was only a perquisite. But the business is not what it was. Formerly he used to get two dollars a head for all he cut off;

now he only gets fifty cents. It is hardly worth while chopping men's heads off at that rate. But then it doesn't take very long. Would I buy his sword? Certainly. Nine dollars. It hangs on my wall to-day, a valuable antidote to much that I read about the advancing civilisation of China.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE IMPERIAL MARITIME CUSTOMS: SIR ROBERT HART AND HIS WORK.

THE "I. G." These letters, meaningless at home, call up instantly in the mind of every foreigner in China a very distinct and striking image—they are as familiar in the Far East as "H.R.H." is at home. For the image is that of the benevolent despot whose outstretched hand unites or severs the Celestial Kingdom and the outside barbarian world; through whose fingers five hundred millions of dollars have run into the coffers of the Son of Heaven, and never one of them stuck; to whom the proudest Chinamen turn for advice in difficulty or danger when other helpers fail; who has staved off a war by writing a telegram; who has declined with thanks the proffered dignity of Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of Her Britannic Majesty; who has ringed China round with an administrative commercial organisation the whole world cannot surpass; who, finally, born to struggle for the poet's bays, has laboured late and early all his life over dollars and duties, with a diplomatic nut, which other people have failed to crack, thrown to him now and then for relaxation. The "I. G." signifies a person and a post: the former is Sir Robert Hart, Bart., G.C.M.G., the latter is Inspector-General of the Imperial Chinese Maritime Customs. And the transcendence of the Customs Service in China may possibly be judged from the story that a Commissioner once took personal affront and quitted the sacred edifice when a missionary implored

the Almighty to "deliver this people from their wicked customs."

After the above, it is hardly necessary to say that Sir Robert Hart is by far the most interesting and influential foreigner in China. To begin with, his power is enormous. The Chinese language, so far as his own field is concerned, is much the same as English to him, and with the Tsungli Yamên he has the influence which thirty years of close dealing with Chinese officials gives him, backed by the proud boast that they have never had reason to regret taking his advice. Then he handles the service he has created from nothing, to one which employs over 3,500 people, presides over an annual foreign trade of £44,000,000, collects £3,600,000 a year, clears 30,000,000 tons of shipping annually, and lights 1,800 miles of coast, exactly as an engineer handles a machine he has constructed—just as tenderly and just as firmly. And yet very few of the men whose livelihood and prospects are absolutely and at every moment in his hands, without the possibility of appeal, would willingly see anybody else in his place. The mere irresponsibility of the "I. G." would ruin most men. Yet Sir Robert owes all his success to his free hand. Does he learn of an old friend or schoolmate fallen upon evil times? "Send your boy to me," he telegraphs, and the youngster's future depends then only upon his own ability and industry. When there was a particularly bad piece of work to be done by one of his subordinates in delimiting the new Tongking-Chinese frontier—months of lonely labour, in savagery and solitude, with never a breath to draw that might not bring fever with it—whom did he send? His brother. Yet his avowal of nepotism is refreshingly frank. "I have never," he says, "advanced a worse man over a better, yet if promotion is due to one of two men of equal deserts, and one of them is of my own flesh and blood, it would be simply unnatural to pass him over." More than once already he has brought out the son of some companion of his boyhood, seen him grow up in the service from student to

Commissioner, save his competency and retire, leaving his benefactor and chief still working the same number of hours every day at his desk. But he rules with a despotism that a Tsar might envy. Any subordinate proved to have discredited the service in any way, is instantly dismissed. His secretary and representative in England, Mr. James Duncan Campbell, C.M.G., who has already distinguished himself in diplomacy on behalf of China and his chief at Paris and Lisbon, is absolutely impersonal in putting all applicants through their preliminary examination; but recognising how often even a limited competition of the broad and practical kind established for the Customs fails to "place" the man who will really be fittest for the work, it is part of Sir Robert's plan to allow Mr. Campbell occasionally to select from the unplaced competitors an individual who seems to him a desirable recruit, as promising and possessing qualities that indicate all-round fitness. So the benevolent despotism works.

Sir Robert Hart left the Consular Service for the Customs—it was barely in existence then—in 1859, and in 1863 he became Inspector-General. And during the thirty-five years that have intervened he has been home twice, once for twelve months and once for six—that is, he has had in his whole lifetime less holiday than one of his subordinates gets every five years. He has never been to the Western Hills, a few miles away, to which all the foreigners in Peking retreat in summer, and he has never even seen the Great Wall, two days' journey distant. But "next spring," he says, he is certainly going home. "Pooh," say people in the Customs Service, when you tell them this; "he has been 'going home in the spring' for the last fifteen years." As for the services he has rendered to China, to England, and to the world, the statesmen of Europe know them very well, and it would take a volume to tell them to others. Besides the creation of the Customs Service itself, which will be his immortality, to take the latest example, it was he alone who concluded the treaty of 1885 between France and China. All negociations

had failed and matters looked very black and threatening. Then, as usual, the Ministers of the Tsungli Yamên came to Sir Robert. He agreed to take up the task on his two invariable conditions—that he should have a free hand, and that his connection with the affair should be kept a profound secret till he either succeeded or failed. Then negociations began by telegraph in cipher between his "den" in Peking and his representative in Paris, and very awkward ones they were. Month after month they proceeded, and at last, when 80,000 taels had been spent in telegrams, Mr. Campbell, who conducted the negociations at the Paris end of the line, was able to report to his chief that a settlement had been reached, and that the Protocol was ready for signature. The "I. G.'s" reply (March 31st) was characteristic: "Signez sans délai, mais ne signez pas premier Avril"! The treaty was signed on April 4th. Then Sir Robert got into his cart and went to the Tsungli Yamên. The Ministers were there and he sat down to a cup of tea with them. By and by he remarked, with the apparent indifference of the Oriental diplomat, "It is exactly nine months to-day since you placed the negociations with France in my hands." "And the child is born!" instantly cried one of the Ministers, seeing the point and delighted at the truly Chinese way of conveying the information. And the curious part of the business was that all this time a special French envoy had been residing at Tientsin, chafing at the slow progress he was making, and not having the least idea that other negociations had been on foot until he received word from home that he might return, as all was arranged. He was so angry that he would not speak to Sir Robert. After sending the last telegram settling the French business, Sir Robert went to the funeral service of Sir Harry Parkes, the British Minister, who had just died. As he entered the chapel of the Legation, Mr. O'Connor, the British *chargé d'affaires*, handed him the translation of a telegram which had just arrived. It was a despatch from Lord

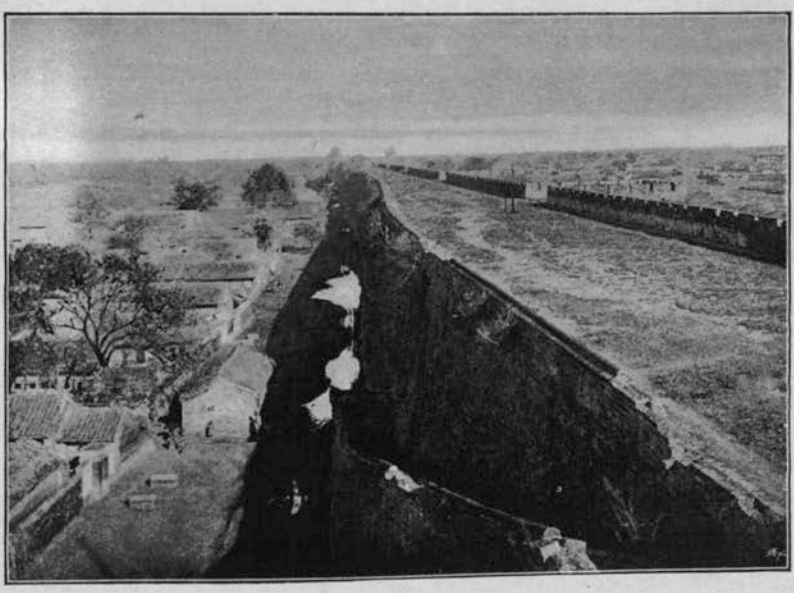
Granville offering him the post of British Minister to China. He accepted, after much hesitation, and his appointment received the Queen's signature on May 3, 1885. At his own request the matter was kept secret at home while arrangements were making for the succession to his position as head of the Customs Service. Meanwhile a Conservative Government succeeded to office in England and telegrams from the Foreign Office kept asking, "May we not publish the appointment?" Sir Robert had seen, however, by this time that the Customs Service would suffer severely if he left it at that time, and this was more to him than any other honour in the world. He therefore telegraphed, "Must I keep it?" and Lord Salisbury replying in very complimentary terms that he was free to do exactly as he thought best, he finally declined—the Empress of China, who was at that time exercising the Imperial function, as his official reply truly but perhaps inadequately explained, preferring that he should remain.

I have said that the statesmen of Europe are well aware of Sir Robert Hart's services, and the proof of this is that there are few civilians so decorated as he. In England a Conservative Government made him a C.M.G., and a Liberal one added the K.C.M.G., and later the G.C.M.G. and Baronetcy. Sweden made him a Chevalier of the Order of Gustavus Vasa; Belgium, a Commander of the Order of Leopold; France, a Grand Officer of the Legion of Honour; Italy, a Grand Officer of the Crown of Italy; Austria sent him the Grand Cross of the Order of Francis Joseph; America has presented him with several medals of Republican appreciation; Portugal has decorated him with the Military Order of Christ; the Emperor of China has conferred upon him the coveted peacock's feather and the Order of the Double Dragon, and has ennobled his ancestors; and his friends at Belfast—his native place—will no doubt be much interested to learn that he is, by direct gift from the Pope—nothing less than *sub annulo piscatoris*—a Commander of the Papal Order of Pius IX. As for

knowledge of China and the Chinese, there is no one living who can compare with him, and I learned more of the inner working of Celestial affairs during the fortnight that I had the honour of being his guest, than a lifetime of simple residence could have afforded.

The "I. G." and Sir Robert Hart, however, are two very different people. "I was calling upon Lady Hart one day," said a lady to me, "and as I wished to speak with Sir Robert I was shown into his office. I found the 'I. G.' there. Oh, it was terrible—I covered my face and fled!" The distinction is indeed admitted by himself. He is not Jekyll and Hyde, but he is certainly post and person. The secret by which he has accomplished so much is an extraordinary devotion to method—most extraordinary of all for an Irishman. This is a subject on which he is far from averse to giving good advice to men younger than himself, and on which, too, he establishes an immediate *entente cordiale* with his guests. "Your early tea," he says, "will be brought to you when you ring your bell—please ring it once only, holding the button pressed while you can count three. Then will it be convenient to you to tiffin at twelve sharp? Because if not, I will tiffin myself at twelve sharp and order your tiffin to be served at any hour you like. I ride from three to five—there is always a mount for you if you wish it. Dinner at half-past seven sharp, and I must ask you always to excuse me at eleven." The consequence is that everything runs like clockwork in Sir Robert's household, and a guest is perfectly at home from the start. But the above methodity is nothing, in comparison. In the dining-room there is a big wicker chair, always covered with a rug, so that you cannot sit down in it. In that chair the master of the house has had his tea every afternoon for thirty years. Upon a shelf stands a large blue and white cup. Out of that he has drunk his tea for thirty years. And by employing the odd moments that his "boy"—who is punctuality itself—has kept him waiting each day in that chair for that cup, he has managed during the last year or two

A Private Cart, Peking.



The Top of the Wall, Peking.

to read the whole of Lucan's *Pharsalia*! Of course he has kept a diary since he could hold a pen. To test his preciseness I made a point of standing each day behind my door, watch in hand, till the clock struck twelve or half-past seven. Then I walked into the central hall from my own side of the house. Sure enough the door opened opposite me and my host walked in from the other. It was like watching for a transit of Venus, or waiting for the apostles to come out of the clock at Strasburg at noon. And as I find I have not said a word of his outer man I may conclude these personalities by saying that he is of medium height and slight build, rather bald, with a kind, thoughtful, and humorous face, a low voice, a shy and punctilious manner; that he is a most entertaining companion, a teller of countless good stories, fond of fun and merry company, devoted to children, a player of the violin and 'cello, and a host whose care and thoughtfulness for his guests are feminine in their insight and famous in their execution. Sir Robert Hart's remarkable personality has played, and may yet play, so great a part in the politics of the Far East that I need hardly apologise for giving these details in illustration of it.

And what, in a word, is this Customs Service? It is first and foremost the collection of all their Maritime Customs at the twenty-four trading ports, reaching nearly 22,000,000 taels last year, their chief source of national income, which the Chinese have confided to the hands of one foreigner, leaving him absolutely free in his action and unhampered by any colleague.

In passing round the coasts of China you frequently see a smart little cruiser flying the yellow flag, with perhaps a miniature steel turret and a couple of quick-firing guns on board; or in a swift launch passing you will notice the Chinese crew and foreign skipper in dapper uniforms, and a ten-barrelled Nordenfeldt projecting over the bow. These are the Customs fleet, watching the coast for smugglers, and ready at a moment's notice to fetch back some outgoing junk that disobeys the

waving of the red flag signal to heave-to and be examined. The duty on opium is so high that smuggling is extremely profitable, and therefore the Customs officers are proportionally keen in discovering and preventing it. Along the coast, too, in the neighbourhood of Hongkong and the Treaty Ports you will see little stations, consisting of a house or two, a few boats, and a look-out. These are also the Customs, and all the lighthouses are in the same hands. Indeed, Sir Robert Hart has already established the "Customs Post" between the Treaty Ports, and he very nearly gave China an Imperial Post Office and an Imperial silver coinage as well. The relations between Sir Robert Hart and the Chinese Government exhibit the most extraordinary example of confidence in individual integrity that I have ever heard of. The "I. G." fixes the total cost of the service, the Tsungli Yamên hands it over to him without a word, and all money collected is paid directly by the merchants into the Chinese bank. A little while ago the grant was 1,300,000 taels annually (a "Haikwan" or Customs tael is the official monetary standard in China, a Mexican dollar and half, in 1893 about 3s. 11¼d.), but an envious Chinaman, whom I will not name, approached the Ministers at the Yamên with a secret offer to do it for 500,000 taels less. The Yamên quietly informed Sir Robert of the attempt to cut him out. His action was characteristic. He replied that the annual sum had been inadequate for some years, and that he, on the other hand, must ask them to raise it by 400,000 taels, which they accordingly did! With this 1,700,000 taels a year Sir Robert does exactly what he likes, his own remuneration being fixed, paying to others the salaries he considers just, according to the conditions he has established. The pay of a student when he enters the service to learn Chinese is 900 taels a year, and this rises to 8,000 taels, more or less, the pay of a full Commissioner. Instead of a promise of pension, which Sir Robert felt that he could not be certain the Chinese would keep when he should be gone, he pays a bonus of one year's pay for seven years' service to the

Indoor Staff, for ten years' service to the Outdoor Staff, and for twelve years' service to the Chinese Staff. But this bonus may be withheld at his pleasure (he has never yet withheld it), and it therefore does not form part of a dead man's estate—a thoughtful provision for widows and children. The Indoor Staff get two years' leave after every seven years' service, and the Outdoor one year after every ten, both on half-pay. As may be expected, the *personnel* of so attractive a service is of a very high class, comprising all nationalities, and to be "in the Customs" confers social standing throughout the Far East. He is a fortunate father, in these days, who can see his son safely started on so pleasant, so well-paid, so assured a road of livelihood, though in exile.

The establishment of the Chinese Customs takes us back to one of the most interesting chapters in the story of the opening of China. The theoretic basis upon which the collection of duties had previously stood, left, like so many other Chinese theories, little to desire, but actual practice corresponded only remotely with it. The native tariffs were "minute and precise," the duties leviable amounting to about 10 per cent. *ad valorem*, but the rule was for each district to be assessed, so to speak, at a certain figure, which it was obliged to remit, anything over that sum remaining the personal profit of the collecting officer. This naturally resulted in a "dicker" between the merchant and the Customs, the latter demanding as much, and the former paying as little, as possible. In an official memorandum upon the subject Sir Robert Hart wrote as follows: "The paltriness of the amount to be answered for, the absence of the supervision of superiors, and the generally subordinate nature of the work to be performed, have all tended to produce such utter laxity and irregularity that the Tariff rates have become dead letters, except in that they represent the maximum collectable on any one article; the additional exemption from all question as to extra and unreported collection has encouraged, if not originated, a species of dishonesty, in which each subordinate lies to his

superior, who, again, winks at such knavery, involved, as he is himself, in turn, in precisely similar transactions."

The introduction of foreign supervision resulted through the confusion that sprang up when Shanghai was held by the rebels in 1854, the Government officials expelled and their Yamêns closed, the collection of duties by the Chinese at an end, and the foreign Consuls in self-defence against future demands taking duties from merchants in the shape of promissory notes whose validity was questionable. But as Lord Clarendon wrote to Lord Elgin, it was "no part of the duty of Her Majesty's Consular authorities to take greater care of the Chinese revenue than the Chinese authorities are disposed to take." To bring the confusion to an end, it was at length agreed that the Chinese custom-house at Shanghai should be reopened under the proper authority, and that it should be placed under the supervision of foreigners to be nominated by the Consuls of the three Treaty Powers—England, France, and the United States. This, of course, was a purely foreign measure, and it met with opposition alike from the Chinese, who found their illegitimate profits threatened, and from the European merchants, who were more strictly treated and unable any longer to drive bargains for the clearing of their cargoes. Nevertheless, said Sir Robert Hart, it tended, "with unpremeditated gravitation," to become Chinese, and no serious objection was made from any quarter when the proposal was made to extend it to the whole foreign trade of China. Accordingly, by Art. 46, and Rule X. of the rules appended to the tariff, of Lord Elgin's Treaty of Tientsin, 1858, it was agreed that "one uniform system shall be enforced at every port." This was the birth of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs. For a time, like its immediate predecessor, it met with opposition from both natives and foreigners, since both suffered in pocket from its honesty and exactitude. But first of all, it secured for the Chinese Government funds "from a hitherto unappreciated source, and that, too, to an extent never dreamt of before." In

fact, one may say without exaggeration that it has been the backbone of all Chinese finance ever since. To-day, when China hints that she desires a loan, and is prepared to offer part of the Customs revenue as a guarantee, the agents of all the great banks and financial houses of Europe tumble over one another in their anxiety to be first in the field with their offers. Yet they would look askance indeed at a loan based solely upon native administration. The service has been extended to each fresh port of China; its numbers and responsibilities have continually increased; and all sorts of duties, outside its original charter, have been laid upon the willing shoulders of its staff. To-day, as I have said, a position in the Customs gives a high social standing of its own. The Customs publications are among the most elaborate volumes of public information and statistics issued in the world, its huge volume of "Decennial Reports" just circulated being possibly the most instructive single work ever printed about China. Finally, to the Customs Service and the labours of Sir Robert Hart, the world owes the lighting and buoying of the whole coast of China. In 1863 there were only two small lights in the Canton district and a lightship at Shanghai, whereas now there are 108 lighthouses, 4 lightships, 89 buoys, and 67 beacons, employing a staff of 66 foreigners and 186 natives, all under the control of the Inspector-General of Customs, and paid for out of the tonnage dues. Although the Customs Service was established under the Treaty of Tientsin between Great Britain and China, all nations have shared equally in its advantages, and they are equitably represented upon its staff. Britishers (it would be inaccurate to say "Englishmen," where many are Scotch and Irish), Americans, Germans, French, Swedes, Danes, and now Portuguese, form the *personnel*, subjects of every nation having a treaty with China being equally eligible under the most favoured nation clause. There are doubtless more subjects of Great Britain than of any other Power, but not nearly so many as there would be if appointments were bestowed in

proportion to the share of each country's trade with China. The staff is at present as follows :—

	Foreigners.	Chinese.	
Revenue Department	682	3,185	
Marine ,,	81	388	
Educational ,,	6	1	
	769	3,574	Total 4,343.

The value of the Foreign Trade of China, controlled by the Customs, for 1893 was 267,995,130 taels—£44,665,855 * ; the duties collected amounted to 21,989,300 taels—£3,664,883 ; the number of ships entered and cleared was 37,902, and their aggregate tonnage 29,318,811. The direct trade of Great Britain with China amounted to 39,823,987 taels—£6,637,361, but the total trade with the British Empire, namely, Hongkong, Singapore and the Straits Settlements, India, Australasia, South Africa, and Canada, reached the enormous figure of 195,710,240 taels—£32,618,373, or *over 73 per cent.* of the entire Foreign Trade of China.

The Chinese Customs Service forms, in short, an *imperium in imperio* without parallel, so far as I know, in history, and it should be a matter of great pride to us that it is built upon the genius, the devotion, and the integrity of an Englishman.

The one dark spot on the horizon of this great organisation is the question of Sir Robert Hart's successor. It is practically certain to be an Englishman—at least, the appointment of a man of any other nationality, however qualified in other respects, would be as unwelcome to the service as it would be impolitic and unfair. It has been suggested, however, that the Chinese Ministers might be tempted, when Sir Robert resigns, to replace him by a Chinaman, in the belief that the

* The tael is nominally an ounce of silver, but its value varies in China in different parts according to the quality of the metal. All the official calculations as above are in *Haikwan*—or Customs—taels. The average exchange value of this for 1893 was 3s. 11½d., but at present its average exchange value has fallen to 3s. 4d., at which rate I have calculated it. It must be borne in mind, of course, that the purchasing power of silver in China has not fallen with European exchange.

service would run of itself, and that they might therefore just as well follow the usual custom of selling the post to the highest bidder. Such an event would be a calamity for the commerce of the world, and therefore the Treaty Powers would never permit it. For whatever may be thought of the statement at home, not a single voice will be raised in the East to contradict me, when I say that among her 350,000,000 people China has not one official who could be trusted to handle so much money without regarding it first of all as a means of personal enrichment. In 1864 Sir Robert wrote to the Secretary of State at home that the Inspectorate "will have finished its work when it shall have produced a native administration, as honest and as efficient, to replace it." Does the experience of thirty-five years lead him to cherish this hope of ultimate Chinese honesty and efficiency? I cannot say, of course, but I should be extremely surprised to learn it.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE GRAND SECRETARY LI.

THE Emperor of China has hitherto been practically invisible to any barbarian eye, and if he were not, he probably knows less about his country than the least of his officials. The real Emperor is the Empress—his aunt, and her proud and determined personality is known to the outside world chiefly through Li Hung-chang. Between the Empress and the Great Viceroy there has always been a close political partnership and an offensive and defensive alliance. Therefore the presence of the Viceroy, till his recent fall from power, at any rate, has been the nearest possible approach for a foreigner to the throne of China. Viceroy of the province of Chihli, hence *ex officio* guardian of the gate of China, Senior of the four Grand Secretaries of State, formerly Grand Guardian of the Heir Apparent, President of the Board of War, Superintendent of the North Sea Trade, Count Shinu-ki of the first rank, special plenipotentiary times without number; practical owner of an army and a fleet; immensely wealthy, preternaturally astute, utterly unscrupulous, having been able to laugh calmly at the dreaded Censors themselves, Li Hung-chang may be fairly looked upon as the ruler for many years of these 350,000,000 of shaven heads and plaited tails, at least so far as the outside world is concerned. If I had a chief object in my travels in the Far East, it was to have an interview with Li Hung-chang. And I talked with him at last for two hours.

Li Hung-chang was born in Anhui in 1825, and is a Metro-

politan Graduate of the year 1847. In the following year we come across the first mention of him in public affairs. He was Financial Commissioner at Soochow, and there issued a proclamation of a highly dictatorial character against coiners and "smashers." He fought against the Taipings for the first time in 1853, when they were defying the Imperialists in the province of Chihli, and he was one of the principal Imperialist leaders when the Wangs again took up their arms in the valley of the Yangtze in 1858. In 1859 he was made *Futai*, or Governor, of Fuhkien, and in 1862 Governor of Kiangsu. This was the moment when Ward, the founder of the "Ever-Victorious Army," who had carried on the war against the Taipings with a handful of queer foreigners and a few thousand native troops whom he had been allowed to enlist and train, had been killed in retaking Tseki, and when his lieutenant, the traitor Burgevine, was trying to succeed him in the command. Li refused to recognise Burgevine's rights, and in spite of the fact that the latter won several battles, succeeded in getting him dismissed by the Emperor, and thus clearing the way for the military reputation of himself and his lieutenant, General Ching. In February, 1863, the British Government consented to the command of the "Ever-Victorious Army," which up to that time had experienced at least its fair share of defeats, being given to Captain Charles Gordon, R.E. Li showed signs at first of being as jealous of him as of his predecessors and the force he commanded; but he probably soon discovered that so long as Gordon was allowed to win the battles he did not care a straw who took the credit, and their relations were amicable until Li committed his great act of treachery. When it became evident to the Taiping leaders that Soochow must fall, and with it their rebellion come to an end, they decided to surrender to the Imperialists. Mow Wang alone was for fighting to the bitter end, and he was accordingly murdered by his fellow Wangs. Chung Wang, the great Taiping general, and eight others surrendered. General Ching had sworn brotherhood with Lar Wang, and Li had pro-

mised Gordon that the lives of them all should be spared. Gordon himself had quarrelled with Li because the pay of his men had not been paid, and had withdrawn the "Ever-Victorious Army" to its headquarters at Quinsan. The first thing Li did as soon as he was left in undisturbed possession of the place was to invite Lar Wang and eight other Wangs to a banquet on board his own boat, and shortly afterwards their nine headless bodies were found on the shore. Gordon's anger was so great that he is said to have returned and sought Li for a whole day, revolver in hand, to shoot him, but the astute *Futai* was not to be found. Gordon, however, retired in disgust, refused to have anything more to do with Li and his cause, and indignantly refused the decoration and the large sum of money that the Emperor sent him. He came to realise, however, that he would be doing great harm by allowing the war to drift on, instead of bringing it to a speedy close, as he felt able to do; so he returned to his command. Years afterwards he appears to have forgiven Li, and at any rate the incident did not destroy his opinion of Li's character as a whole, for I have seen a letter from him in which he says, "Li, in spite of his cutting the Wangs' heads off, is a man worthy the sacrifice of a life I have ceased to value." Nevertheless, Gordon's estimate of Li's character may be judged from his view of the future relations of China and Russia, which was that Russia would advance, driving the Chinese forces gradually back upon Peking, and that Li, while pretending, in response to reiterated and imploring appeals from the Emperor and Empress, to be making his best efforts, would do absolutely nothing; that then, when the Russians had taken Peking, Li would open negociations with them, grant them any terms they desired in return for their support of him; that they would retire and that Li would pose successfully as the saviour of China, and possess himself of the throne. This opinion of Gordon's was once published in Shanghai, and Li was so angry that he succeeded in bringing enough pressure to bear to get the paper suppressed. "It is impossible," says the chief

historian of China, with regard to the murder of the Wangs, "to apportion the blame for this treacherous act between Li Hung-chang and General Ching. The latter was morally the more guilty, but it seems as if Li Hung-chang were the real instigator of the crime."* The facts that the fatal banquet took place on Li's boat, that Ching was directly subordinate to Li and would hardly have dared to take so irrevocable a step on his own authority, and that Gordon himself was sure who was the perpetrator of the crime, leave little doubt on the subject. All that can be urged in Li's defence is that to break one's promise and murder one's enemies in cold blood is no serious infraction of Chinese military ethics. The Wangs were fortunate that they were not tortured as well as murdered.

In 1867 Li took the field against the Shantung rebels, and in the same year he was made Governor-General of Hu Kwang. In 1870 he was elevated to his present post of Viceroy of Chihli, the most important viceroyalty in China, since that Province lies between the capital and the outside world, and this post he has held ever since, except for a period when he went into mourning. In 1876 he took the leading part in coping with the great famine, and in 1884 he was made Grand Secretary of State.

For many years the Yamên of Li Hung-chang at Tientsin has been the centre of Chinese foreign affairs—indeed the question has been raised whether it would not be better for the foreign Ministers to reside there, instead of ruining their tempers and wasting their time by fruitless visits and endless discussions at the Tsungli Yamên, the theoretical Board of Foreign Affairs at Peking. Whenever China has had to deal diplomatically with foreign nations, Li has been her mouthpiece. Thus at Chefoo, where Sir Thomas Wade very rightly compelled Li to meet him, he signed the Chefoo Convention (never ratified) in 1876; at Tientsin, the Li-Fournier Convention of 1884, in connection with which charges of falsification of the document were made

* D. C. Boulger, "A History of China," iii. p. 616, from which work I have also taken the allusion to the first mention of Li in public life.

by each signatory against the other, leading to Captain Fournier's subsequent duel in Paris; the Treaty with M. Patenôtre, representing France, at Tientsin in June 1885; and the Li-Ito Convention of Tientsin regarding Korea, in 1885. His career, however, has by no means been an uninterrupted success. Many times he has been reprimanded from the throne for faults small and great, and his enemies have unceasingly plotted against him. His great influence has never been sufficient to procure the restoration to office of that very able literate but unscrupulous man, Chang Pei-lun, who was disgraced and banished to the Russian frontier for having deserted his post as governor of Foochow Arsenal, and to whom Li married his daughter—in spite of her weeks of weeping and desperate opposition, according to gossip—in 1889. Much of his power—or rather, much of the failure of his enemies—must be attributed to the army with which he has surrounded himself. This has been supposed to number fifteen thousand men, but all Chinese figures on such matters are pure guess-work. These have undoubtedly been the best-armed and best-drilled troops in China, and from them have been drawn the contingents for the defence of the Taku Forts at the mouth of the Peiho River, and the fortress of Port Arthur. One of the most astonishing features of the Japanese war is the fact that this army has given no account of itself; indeed, it is not certain that it has not been kept in the neighbourhood of Tientsin all the time, in view of eventualities in which its master might have dire personal need of its services. I made many attempts while I was staying at Tientsin to see some of these much-praised battalions and their camps, but although I had the formal permission of Li himself to do so, every opportunity that I suggested was found to be quite impossible, and I never caught sight of them, except the few that were occasionally to be seen in the streets. With regard to the great Viceroy himself, however, I was more favoured.

It will easily be believed that he is not the most accessible

A Tartar General. Prince Ch'ing. Li Hung-chang.

THREE YELLOW JACKETS.

of men, and after waiting a week at Tientsin for an answer to my request for an interview, my methods of influence being all exhausted for the moment, I had temporarily relinquished the project and ordered my ponies to be ready to start for Peking the next morning. It happened to be the Race Day at Tientsin and business was suspended, the banks closed and everybody gone to the course. At half-past two, as I had my foot in the stirrup to go too, a European-looking note was put into my hand. It was beautifully written, and read: "Dear Mr. Norman, I have the pleasure to inform you that His Excellency the Viceroy Li will be pleased to receive you this afternoon at 4.30. I hope therefore to find you in the waiting-room of His Excellency's Yamên at the hour appointed. Yours sincerely, Lo Fêng Luh." There was no time to be lost, as the Viceroy's residence is two or three miles from the hotel, and it was necessary to procure a chair, with bearers in official red hats, and a man to carry one's card, for I was informed that it would not be dignified to pay such a visit of ceremony on horseback or in a jinriksha. A friendly Chinese merchant soon procured these for me, and the four bearers carried me off in the closed chair, like a cat in a basket, at the rate of five miles an hour, while the card-man trotted alongside and objurgated anybody who got in the way. Mr. Lo Fêng Luh, I should add, is the English Secretary to the Viceroy, and an official holding several important appointments.

The Yamên (literally "official gate") of a Chinese official is his combined private and official residence, though in general use the word "Yamên" is equivalent to "office" or "bureau." It consists always of a number of buildings surrounded by a strong wall, with a wide gateway and painted doors. In the centre are the official's private living-rooms and the apartments of his wife, and of his concubines if he has any; then come his secretaries' offices, his waiting-rooms and his large official court or reception room. Around the yard into which you enter are the buildings where his servants and "runners" live, the latter being the harpy-like dependents, who shout when his dis-

tinguished visitors enter, form his train when he goes out, do all his dirty work, "squeeze" his petitioners and sell his secrets—a set of ruffians of the worst type. If he is a magistrate his Yamên contains also a prison, and his "runners" stand by to deal with culprits condemned to "eat bamboo." An official Yamên is also a house of refuge for anybody fleeing from popular vengeance. Half an hour's shaking through the narrow streets of the native streets of the city of Tientsin brought me to a bridge over the river, across which two dense crowds were passing both ways—coolies, beggars, mandarins in chairs, on ponies and on donkeys, and all kinds of common citizens. By the time we had jostled half-way across, the famous Yamên was in full view—a mass of roofs enclosed in a high wall of grey brick, with a big gateway projecting at one side, over which a score flags and banners were waving, while in front a crowd of petitioners and beggars raised a ceaseless hubbub. My bearers broke into a trot as soon as they came in sight of the gate, and entering it swung rapidly round a blank wall built directly in front of it, and deposited me in the courtyard behind. This wall is set up in every Yamên with the geomantic object of stopping evil influences, which can only proceed in a straight line. Two enormous and gaudy figures of officials or emperors or deities—I do not know which—were pasted to the doors, and opposite these, so placed as to catch the eye of the Viceroy every time he goes forth, is a similar flaming monster, the *t'an* or beast Avarice—a warning against the besetting sin of Chinese officialdom. While I was noticing these, and the runners loitering about were commenting in chorus upon my personal appearance in a manner evidently very entertaining to themselves, my card-man had rushed forward and two petty officials came to conduct me to the waiting-room.

This was the first surprise. The great man's anteroom resembled the out-patients' waiting-room in a charity hospital at home—a bare, dirty, whitewashed room, no bigger than an ordinary parlour, with a seat like that of a third-class railway

carriage running round it, broken at intervals of a couple of feet by small tables placed upon it. Mr. Lo Fêng Luh, by contrast more resplendent in his official winter dress of silk and satin and sable and ermine, wearing of course a red-roofed hat crowned by a big button, was already there, and tea was served to us at once. Before we had time to touch it, however, the Viceroy's chamberlain came to say that the Chung Tang awaited us. I should explain that to say "Li Hung-chang," as we do, is to Chinese ears both ignorant and rude; he should be spoken of as "Li Chung Tang," *i.e.*, "Grand Secretary Li," or more simply, when in his own province, "the Chung Tang." The foreign community at Tientsin, at least all of them who are familiar with Chinese etiquette, invariably employ the last expression.

We followed the chamberlain, or whatever he was, for a couple of minutes, across a yard, through several doorways, around the veranda of an open court, and turned abruptly into a room and round a large screen. "The Viceroy," said Mr. Lo, with perfect European manners, as he stepped back and left me face to face with a tall and strongly-built Chinaman who put out his hand and smiled pleasantly and grunted a solitary syllable. "The Viceroy says he is very glad to see you," explained Mr. Lo, very much as a proud mother elaborately interprets the inarticulate cackle of her first-born. The great man acknowledged my bow in the Chinese manner—by bowing with his clasped hands at the height of his chin, and motioned us to be seated, myself opposite him, Mr. Lo on a foreign circular lounge between us.

Li Chung Tang is a pure Chinaman, not Manchu like the dynasty he serves. He is very tall for a Chinese, five feet eleven, I should guess, and must have been a powerful man in his youth. His face is the most strongly moulded I saw in China—not flat, as they usually are, but with all the features distinctly marked and the lines broad and deep, a face that would hold its own in comparison with any foreign face. A thin

grey moustache and "chin-beard" did not conceal his mouth and chin at all, but what the general expression of his face may be I have no idea, as he wore an enormous pair of round tortoise-shell goggles. This may be his custom, as it certainly gives him a great advantage in diplomatic conversation, or it may have been by a temporary order of the doctor, as he was just recovering from a rather alarming attack of facial paralysis which rendered him unable to speak for several days, and of which I could see traces in the twitching and drawn lines of one side of his face. But at any rate he looked me straight in the eye during nearly the whole of our interview, while I have so slight a notion of what he really looks like, that if I were not familiar with his photograph I doubt if I should recognise him in the street without his glasses.

The Viceroy was dressed simply, not to say shabbily, in the ordinary Chinese stiff round hat, a thickly-padded upper garment of some kind of yellow silk and an undergarment of grey silk. His hands were tucked into his wide sleeves and only came out twice during our conversation, once when he wished to blow his nose, which he did in the familiar but indescribable manner of the tramp in the street, and once when he was startled by a little piece of news. Yet he smoked a pipe five feet long. An attendant stood with pipe, smoking materials and fire, at the back of the reception-room, and every five minutes he walked solemnly forward, filled the pipe, blew the fire-stick into a flame, the Viceroy opened one corner of his mouth, the attendant inserted the stem and applied the light to the bowl, the great man absorbed the smoke and opened his mouth again, when the pipe-bearer withdrew as he had come. This occurred a score times at least, and never a muscle did the Viceroy move, except just to open the corner of his mouth wide enough to admit the pipe-stem. The reception-room is a small parlour, well-furnished with modern European furniture, except on one side where an alcove, hung with scarlet silk, contains a cushion and table adopted for sitting and writing in the Chinese

fashion. The Chung Tang probably sits in this elevated post on state occasions; on the present he reclined very comfortably upon a sofa. Three or four attendants did nothing and did it well, simply listening to the conversation, while I saw in the background that another had opened a window an inch and was listening from outside. These attendants are always present at official interviews, extraordinary as such a habit may seem to us, and the natural result is that most of the foreign representatives have one at each Yamên in their pay, and that there are few secrets which money will not buy. After I left the Chung Tang I met a facetious acquaintance who inquired where I had been. "Talking with the Viceroy," I replied. "Oh," he said, "I'll get all you said to him for a couple of dollars to-morrow." Naturally I offered it to him then and there at half-price. There are two interesting pictures in this reception-room. One represents the fable of the monkey, the cat and the chestnuts, and I believe the Viceroy pointed to this on a recent occasion when he was approached on behalf of British interests in Thibet. The other puzzled me a good deal. It hung immediately over the Viceroy's own seat and was a very large full-length portrait in oil, representing a tall man with a long grey beard, in a frock coat, and covered with decorations. Later I learned that it was a portrait of Herr Krupp, presented by himself. Its position suggests the reflection—an undoubtedly true one—that the Chinese have always loved that foreigner best who has best helped them to keep all foreigners away.

As soon as we were seated, an attendant brought tea and champagne and placed them on a little table beside each of us, and the interview began, Mr. Lo translating so perfectly and so promptly that it was as though we were both speaking the same language. My own idea, of course, was that I was about to interview the Viceroy. Nothing was further from his intention, which was clearly to interview me. Question after question fell from his lips for a whole hour, and as Mr. Lo apparently did not translate the feeble attempts I made from time to time to

stem the interrogatory torrent, I was as helpless as a man in a dentist's chair. I think the best thing I can do is to repeat the first part of the conversation *verbatim*, not that the subject-matter is of the slightest importance, but because it throws a flood of light on the working of the Viceroy's mind, and exhibits a curious mixture of childishness, astuteness and Chinese manners. After nearly an hour of it I began to feel that I must be with Alice in Wonderland. Here it is, then, as nearly word for word as I can recall it.

"The Viceroy hopes you are in good health and that you have had a pleasant journey." Reply taken for granted. "Where have you been?" and "Where are you going?" Easily answered. "How old are you?" This, I afterward learned, is an inquiry essential to politeness in China—I ought to have returned the compliment. "What is your yearly income from writing for newspapers?" I remembered that sophists hold it to be not always imperative to speak the exact truth under pressure, and I replied accordingly, with the natural result that the next remark was, "His Excellency says you must be a very skilful writer to earn so much money." I could not observe whether he also winked under his goggles. "You have made a long journey—have you no companion?" "None whatever." "Are you not afraid of being stabbed?" "In dangerous countries—not, of course, in China—I carry means of defending myself." "The Viceroy says you must have been in very great danger." "Not to my knowledge." "The world is full of wicked people." "His Excellency is evidently well acquainted with it." "Are you going to Thibet?" I took this inquiry for a joke, as nobody knows better than the Chung Tang that it is almost as easy to go to the moon, so I replied in the same spirit, "Yes, and I have specially to beg from His Excellency the favour of a safe-conduct and letter of recommendation to the Grand Llama himself." But it was no joke at all. "Impossible!" exclaimed the Viceroy, sitting bolt upright so suddenly that the pipe-bearer narrowly escaped prodding him

in the eye with the mouth-piece. "Impossible! Certainly not! I cannot do anything of the kind. It would be most unwise of him to think of going." I did not dare to admit that I had ventured to joke with the great man, so I said, "Then if it is impossible for me to go, perhaps His Excellency will tell me what is the truth about the recent troubles." "The people of Thibet are very foolish," was the reply, "but I have sent a Commissioner to them, who is at this moment conferring with the English, and there will be no more fighting." I tried to look like a person who believes what he is told. As a matter of fact, Li Hung-chang has as much power over the Thibetans as the Sultan has over the Mahdi, but Thibet is a very sensitive spot with the Chinese authorities, and they would probably do anything, even to declaring war, to keep it out of the hands of the barbarians.

Then followed an hour during which the Viceroy questioned and cross-questioned me upon everything I had seen in the Far East, and my opinions upon every conceivable question at issue between the Powers. At last my patience gave way. I had seen Li Hung-chang, I had talked with him, I had examined his surroundings, and if he was not going to tell me anything, it was not worth while for me to sit there any longer. So to the twentieth inquiry about possible Russian action in Korea, I replied, "My opinions upon such a matter can have no value whatever for His Excellency, whereas if he would favour me with an authoritative statement concerning the relations of China, Korea and Russia, it would have the greatest possible value for the rest of the world." And I emphasized the request by taking up my hat and drinking the glass of wine; for I had been instructed previously that when either host or guest in China wishes to give the signal for departure, he empties his cup or glass. When Mr. Lo had translated my remark there was a moment's silence. Then, speaking very deliberately, the Viceroy said, "The relations referred to in your question are as follows: there is a distinct understanding between China and Russia that

any action by the latter in Korea will be regarded by the former as a *casus belli*." In reply to a second question the Viceroy added, "At present the relations between China and Russia are simple. Upon the long Russian-Chinese frontier China is strong, Russia is weak. Vladivostok is very far from real Russia. It is alone. Russia and China had better be good friends." "But when the trans-Siberian railway is finished, Excellency——?" "Yes, then the relations of China and Russia will be revised. As regards Korea, it is a country unable to stand by itself, any talk of its 'independence' is waste of words, the relation of China to it is the same as it has always been, and you may be prepared shortly to see events which will make this relation quite clear to all the world."

I knew enough of China at the time not to attach much importance to all this; but recent events have shown how peculiarly fatuous it was. Did the Viceroy know, when he said these things to me and similar ones to many other persons, that China was rotten through and through, and as incapable of either attack or defence as she was of internal reform? I think he did. When our conversation was over, he took his glass at last and we all drank, Mr. Lo translating, "His Excellency wishes you a pleasant journey, and says you will please give a good account of your interview with him." Then the Viceroy was so kind as to accompany me across his private courtyard and Mr. Lo politely saw me into my chair.

He would be a presumptuous critic who should attempt an analysis of so complex and subtle a character as that of the Grand Secretary Li. Something, however, must be said, if only in correction of a popular misapprehension. It is commonly supposed that Li's intimate acquaintance with foreigners and his long experience of their diplomatic and commercial methods have led him to conceive a certain sympathy with them and a certain desire to see foreign influence stronger in China. This is far from the fact. The more Li has seen of foreigners the less he has liked them. We must not be wholly surprised

at this, since in some respects foreigners have shown him an unattractive side of their character. His Yamên has been the focus of every commercial intrigue undertaken on behalf of Western nations, and most European commerce with official China has been conducted by means of intrigue. So far as merchants are concerned, British and German and French and American have occupied virtually the same position, though I like to think that our own countrymen have not descended to the methods of some of their competitors. But the difference between British and other civilised commercial dealings with the Viceroy has been this, that whereas other nations have been supported through thick and thin by their Ministers, our diplomatic agents have left our merchants to fight their battles alone. This policy has sometimes been carried to the point of indifference, and China merchants have some very well-founded grievances against at least one British Minister for his supineness, but on the whole the attitude of our representatives has been one of dignity. As regards France and Germany, every diplomatic concession Li has desired has had to be bought by a corresponding commercial concession on his part. Hence many a fat contract lost to British trade. And on countless occasions when a commercial offer has been refused by the Chinese on its merits, an irate Minister has hastened off to the Viceroy's Yamên and by means of very direct hints, if not by thinly-veiled threats, has secured a favourable consideration for it. Moreover, the great European firms have been well aware of the part that bribery plays in Chinese affairs. Whether Li has taken bribes or not, I do not know, though dozens of amusing stories on the subject are in circulation in Tientsin; but it is safe to say that if he has not, he occupies a solitary position of honour among Chinese officials. These are the circumstances, therefore, under which Li has not always seen the best side of European civilisation. Apart from individual acts, however, he is like all his countrymen in thoroughly disliking us and all the principles of our ways.

Between the European and the Chinaman there is this quite instinctive, as well as quite reasoned, aversion. He has sought to avail himself of our abilities, especially where these might enable him to hold us and all other foreigners at arm's length in the future, but to him the millennium would be the final disappearance of every "foreign devil" from China. Upon this point there can be no doubt whatever, however much it may suit the policy of China from time to time to let the contrary be assumed. A recent British Minister to China said to me himself that he believed the vast majority of Chinamen of all classes would willingly mortgage the whole revenue of China for the next thirty years, to see the back of the last foreigner, and to have the certainty that he would never return; and that Li Hung-chang would be the leader in this step. There can be no better example of Li's employment of Western relations to suit the purposes of China than a remarkable letter he wrote in 1881 to a Korean official:—"Of late years Japan has adopted Western customs. . . . Her national liabilities having largely increased, she is casting her eyes about in search of some convenient acquisition which may recoup her. . . . The fate of Loochoo is at once a warning and a regret to both China and Korea. . . . Her aggressive designs upon Korea will be best frustrated by the latter's alliance with Western nations." * While this was his advice, however, the Viceroy has endeavoured in every possible way, through his nominee and creature, Yuen, the Chinese Resident in Seoul, to thwart foreign influence upon Korea.

In a previous chapter I have spoken of Li Hung-chang's commercial enterprise, the China Merchants' Steam Navigation Company and the cotton-mills at Shanghai. These are other examples of his attempts to beat foreigners at their own game. He has also established a medical college at Tientsin, where twenty youths are trained for the medical staff of the army and

* Quoted in "The Life of Sir Harry Parkes," by F. V. Dickins and S. Lane-Poole, ii. p. 205.

navy. In view of his treatment of several young Chinese graduates in medicine, however, whom in public he complimented, and in private refused to employ, one hesitates to accord him the credit which should belong to this innovation.

The news now is that Li Hung-chang has been degraded, and that his unique position is gone for ever. We should not be too ready to believe this. It may be, of course, that his enemies have thrown him at last, but the Emperor and Empress-Dowager will hardly realise how dependent upon him they have been, until the barrier of his unique personality and experience has been removed from between themselves and the barbarian world. The decree depriving him of his Yellow Jacket and peacock's feathers must not be taken *au grand sérieux*. "Degradation" of this character is merely a Chinese method of incentive. In fact, the decree itself virtually promises restitution, and as I have not seen a translation in the English Press it is worth reproducing in full :—

The *Wo-jên* having broken faith with Korea and forcibly occupied that country, the Throne sympathised with its tributary kingdom in her distress and so raised an army to attack the common enemy. Upon Li Hung-chang, Imperial High Commissioner of the Pei-yang, having chief control of the forces there, rested the entire *onus* of being prepared for emergencies. But, instead, he has been unable to act with speed and promptness in his military preparations, so that much time has elapsed without any important results. He has indeed failed in the trust reposed in him by us. We therefore command that his decoration of the three-eyed peacock feather be plucked off from (his hat), and that he be stripped of his Yellow Riding Jacket as a slight punishment. It is necessary then, that the said Imperial High Commissioner exert himself to the utmost and decide upon what should be done; that he direct and hasten the various armies from the various provinces to the front, in order that all may put forth their best strength to chase and root out the enemy. In this way Li Hung-chang may hope to redeem his former errors.

This is instructive not only for the light it throws upon such Chinese "degradation," but also as a contemporary example of the paternalism of the Imperial sway. It might be a great mistake, however, to conclude from this that the aged Viceroy has at length reached that third day on which there—

> "comes a frost, a killing frost;
> And—when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
> His greatness is a-ripening—nips his root,
> And then he falls."

CHAPTER XVIII.

CHINA AMONG THE GREAT POWERS.

IN the original plan of this volume, the chapter with the above title was intended to be one of the longest and most argumentative. At that time, though it was less than a year ago, China was regarded by almost all foreign writers as one of the Great Powers. Her enormous resources in population, and her excellent credit—thanks to Sir Robert Hart's work, which made every financial house in Europe eager to lend her money—were regarded with the greatest respect by military writers. It was understood that she had taken to heart the lesson of her defeat by France, and was labouring earnestly to guard against similar misfortunes in the future. It was known that she had purchased enormous quantities of military and naval equipment in Europe, that she had built arsenals, docks, and forts up and down the country, and that a considerable number of the most capable and energetic foreign military and naval experts had been engaged for years in arranging her armaments and drilling her men. She had gained one or two distinct successes in diplomacy against European Powers, and Li Hung-chang had frequently declared that he would regard certain actions as a *casus belli;* her naval base and dockyard at Port Arthur had been built for her at enormous expense by a French syndicate; Gordon's advice to fortify Wei-hai-wei had been followed; the powerful Taku forts at the mouth of the Peiho commanding the approach to Tientsin, and the Bogue

forts on the Canton River had frowned impressively upon every foreign visitor; while the famous Northern Squadron of German-built ironclads had visited the ports of the Far East and exchanged elaborate salutes. From all this, foreign writers came to the conclusion that China had shaken off her Oriental lethargy, had drawn boldly upon her vast reserve of strength, had armed herself strongly according to modern scientific fashions, and had therefore at last taken her place among the great military and naval Powers of the world. To such an extent was this believed, that probably a majority of publicists came to look upon China as the great bulwark in Asia against the Russian advance, and suggestions of an Anglo-Chinese alliance were the commonplaces of diplomatic conversation. Such was the opinion a few months ago regarding China, and it was against this view that the present chapter was to be directed. I had come to the conclusion, and had frequently expressed it in print, that so far from China being a Great Power, her land forces would not stop any foreign army for a week, and that her navy would be the prey of the first foreign fleet that attacked it; that so far from an Anglo-Chinese alliance being a reasonable ideal, in the first place China would not make an alliance with any foreign country, second, if she made one she would not adhere to it, and third, if she made it and adhered to it, it would not be worth having.

The unlooked-for outbreak of war between Japan and China, and its inevitable results, have rendered unnecessary any further exposure of the hollowness of Chinese claims. The sword of the Japanese has proved mightier in demonstration than the pen of any critic could have hoped to be. Against the French soldiers in Tongking, as brave as possible, but mere handfuls in number, exhausted by the climate, badly led, and feebly supported from home—the Chinese troops won a good many victories and were several times within a hair's breadth of winning greater ones; but against the regiments of Japan, fighting in a climate which was their own, admirably officered,

perfectly armed, and enthusiastically supported, the Chinese braves have fallen back like sheep. And since in the first naval battle the European strengthening of the fleet was killed off, the Northern Squadron has done nothing but lie under the guns of the forts, or search those parts of the sea where it was certain that no Japanese ships would be found. A-san, Phyŏng-yang, the Yalu River, Kinchow, and Port Arthur, have given us at last that most difficult thing to secure—the truth about China. It would be waste of time, therefore, to dwell upon matters now so familiar to the whole world, or to argue in support of truths so irresistibly taught by events. It may still be interesting, however, to describe briefly some of the ways in which China prepared herself for the defeat which has now overtaken her, especially since these are hardly less amusing than instructive.

Five years ago the Englishman who knows more of that inscrutable entity, the Chinese mind, than any man living, told me that of all her "vassals," there were only two for which China would fight—Thibet and Korea. Personally, I do not believe that anything which could happen, short of an advance upon Peking itself, would cause China to declare war against any European Power. The role of sleeping leviathan suited her perfectly, but she has well known that the first step she might take would destroy the illusion upon which her security has been based. What she has liked is to remain perfectly quiescent, while the world trembled to think what she might do if aroused—to lie still in her Confucian savagery, while such utterances as that mass of rubbish called "China: the Sleep and the Awakening," which the Marquis Tsêng signed (but did not write) in the *Asiatic Quarterly* for January, 1887, have represented her as advancing with a cautious but irresistible march. The strangest thing is that the civilised world has been deceived by these tactics, and even such keen analysts of national characteristics as the late Mr. Charles Pearson have painted a future in which China, having prepared herself by long training, should put forth her gigantic strength and over-

run the world. This ethnical fable of "Jack and the Beanstalk" has been amusing enough to anybody who really knows the first facts about China, but it is safe to conjecture that nobody has been moved by it to such hearty laughter as the Viceroy of Chihli himself. Japan has had no illusions about China, and she was quite ready to prick the bubble. But the Beanstalk is hard to cut down. At the beginning of the war a news agency solemnly announced that each province of China was called upon to furnish 20,000 men; nineteen multiplied by 20,000 is 380,000, and the astounded reader was invited to believe that this enormous force was gathering and marching to Peking like Lars Porsena's men to Rome. The newspaper reader might perhaps not be expected to know that the Emperor of China could as easily raise 20,000 men in Mars as in some of his provinces; that it would not be difficult to enlist a considerable force in one part of China to attack another part; that absolutely no organisation exists in China for the handling of such masses; that the men would find themselves without uniforms, without arms, without food, without the most rudimentary knowledge of war, without leaders of any description whatever; or that a huge army of the kind in the neighbourhood of the capital would be almost certain to seize the opportunity to upset the present alien Government. But it is hardly making too high a demand upon any reader that he should have glanced at the map of China, made a rough multiplication of the degrees of longitude he saw before him, and asked himself how 20,000 men were to march a thousand miles through a country which is always on the verge of famine. However, when one of our leading statesmen was of opinion that China must inevitably win in the end, "because of her enormous armed strength," other people might be excused for going astray. One expression of opinion, however, puzzled me extremely. Captain Lang, R.N., to whose great administrative skill and absolute devotion to her interests China owes most of whatever naval strength she has acquired—and whom, it

may be added, she characteristically rewarded by dismissing him with insult — has been reported as saying to an interviewer, among many other rather startling tributes to Chinese naval prowess, that "with an officer like Admiral Ting, whom I would not hesitate to follow anywhere, the Chinese navy would prove a splendid force." But this worthy "Admiral" has had no education whatever as a seaman, owing his appointment to the ordinary routine of competitive examination in the Chinese classics, and being merely the nominal equal of Admiral—as he then was—Lang, to "save the face" of the Chinese. In fact, he was previously a cavalry General, a branch of the service in which he would be equally unprejudiced by any information. Moreover, Admiral Ting Ju-ch'ang was the hero of the famous story of the Chinese Admiral who was found one day playing pitch and toss, or what corresponds to it in China, with the sentry at his door, both of them seated on the floor of the Admiral's cabin. I had an opportunity once of talking with a foreign instructor on board a certain Chinese ironclad. In reply to my inquiry when the ship would sail, he said, "The only way we really know when we are to sail is by the Admiral coming aboard. He leaves the ship as soon as we come into port, and we never see him again until we sail. He knows nothing at all about naval matters—he is just the mandarin put on board by Li. Why, when somebody comes aboard to visit him, he'll perhaps call a sampan and see him off over the port side! Then I have seen him gambling here on the quarter-deck with a common seaman, and when he has won all his money he'll tell the paymaster to advance the seaman some more, so that he can go on playing. Yes, sir, that is a literal fact. The only men on board that could really do anything are these young fellows, the captain and lieutenants, and they have no power at all. They fought against the French and got nothing at all for it—just a few dollars, and were told to take themselves off. The rings on the big Krupps are beginning to open out already, and if there is the least dirt or sand

you can't shut them." "Then I suppose," I said, "that no European squadron need be afraid of the Pei-yang Squadron yet?" "No fear, sir, it is only a question who will get them as prizes," was the reply.

"The truth is, that if the Japanese do not sweep the Chinese from the sea, then study, skill, devotion, and experience go for nothing, and there is no need for us to train our naval officers at all. One thing only could save the Chinese on the sea—the enlistment by large promises of money of European naval officers, in whose hands complete and unfettered control should be placed. The Chinese seamen are not wanting in courage, but naturally enough they have no confidence whatever in their leaders, and they would probably fight well enough to give their undoubtedly fine ships a chance if they were well commanded." *

The actual condition of the Chinese army and navy, while so much was believed of it abroad, cannot be understood from any descriptions in general terms. Let me therefore give a few scattered facts which came to my knowledge. I was once being shown by a Chinese naval officer over one of their two biggest ironclads, which was on a cruise at the time, and therefore presumably in first-rate condition. I noticed a gun carefully protected in a canvas cover. As we passed it, I asked casually what it was. The officer explained with pride that it was a new quick-firing gun, and called a quartermaster to remove the covering. The order was obeyed with evident reluctance, and when the gun was at length exposed it proved to be used by one of the watches as a receptacle for their "chow," and was filled with chop-sticks and littered with rice and pickles. Of course I promptly looked the other way, but it required no knowledge of Chinese to interpret the remarks of the officer to the quartermaster. No doubt the whole watch went through the process of

* To avoid the appearance of prophesying after the event I may be permitted to say that I wrote these words on August 18, 1894, and that they appeared in the *Contemporary Review* for September. The battle of the Yalu was fought on September 17.

"eating bamboo" the moment I was off the ship; but the Chinese are incorrigible. It would be discouraging to a European engineer who should be appointed to a Chinese ship to find that if there were any subordinate boiler small enough for the purpose, it had been used for stewing dog. There is nothing inherently improbable in the story repeated by the correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette* that a Chinese warship went to the Yalu without one of its guns, the commander having pawned it and not been able to redeem it in time.

Another example of Chinese administration which came to my knowledge may be interesting at this moment. Some years ago the Chinese Government ordered a magnificent set of Hotchkiss cartridge-making machinery. In due time this arrived, but two mandarins claimed it for their respective districts, and, failing to agree, each seized such portions of the machinery as he could secure and carried them off to his own place. When I was there, half the machinery was in one arsenal and half in another several hundred miles away. Unfortunately, Europeans are not always above taking advantage of Chinese supineness. A cargo of cocoa powder was ordered from well-known manufacturers and landed at Port Arthur for use in the big guns there. By-and-by it was tried and found not to ignite, and finally the whole of it was thrown into the sea. But both Europeans and Chinese had pocketed a good "squeeze" out of the transaction. The superintendent of one of the largest arsenals in China receives an allowance to buy steel: he buys iron, and pockets the difference. It is, therefore, fair to presume that the rifle barrels he is turning out are made of iron. With my own eyes I saw at an important arsenal the machinery for making rifle barrels standing idle, while hundreds of men in the same workshop were making them by hand.

Here is another story which I know to be true. An American agent showed a Chinese Viceroy the performance of a Hotchkiss gun. The Viceroy promised an order, but said he should like first to show it to some of his officers, to find out if they could

use it. So the gun was lent. The Chinese took it to pieces, worked day and night in making full-sized working drawings, put it together again, and sent it back, and the Viceroy wrote to say that he had decided not to purchase it. Again—in all these instances I have names and places and dates in my note-books, but for obvious reasons I omit them—a Chinese Viceroy ordered estimates for a complete set of rifle-making machinery from the United States. The total cost was (say) 500,000 dols. The Viceroy, supposing it was like a Chinese estimate, drew that sum from the Treasury, cut the estimate down to 400,000, and gave the money and the estimate to an official with orders to procure the machinery. He, in his turn, "squeezed" it a little more, and then made the estimate agree with the money that remained by striking his pencil through several important items. The machinery in due course arrived as ordered, and of course could not be set up.

I had a very interesting conversation with a foreigner acting as torpedo-instructor in the Chinese navy. He told me that Chinese officers receive pay for a certain number of men, and that they are in the habit of making up the total by putting all their relations and servants in uniform on inspection days, and drawing their pay all the rest of the time. When an admiral is appointed to a ship, he makes his brother-in-law the boatswain, and his cousin the cook. I asked this torpedo-instructor whether his pupils really acquired any comprehension of the art of torpedo warfare. He assured me that a considerable proportion of them really did. I asked him whether they would actually fight. He hesitated, and I added: "Would they not probably discharge all their torpedoes at once and then run away?" "I think they would," he answered. *À propos* of "squeezing," he told me that all his pupils had to give money, not being able to afford it, to the Viceroy before they could get the rewards that had been promised them by him when he inspected them. My informant himself, when he went to the Yamên to get his decoration, was stopped with a demand for

sixty taels by the Viceroy's head "boy," and finally beat him down to forty dollars, without which it would have been impossible for him to get an audience. This system, he added, extends through everything. All the "boys" at the Yamên actually buy their posts, and only keep them by a regular subsidy to the Viceroy himself. A Chinese official who "squeezes" up to 20 per cent. is regarded as honest; more than that the Chinese consider grasping.

As an example of Chinese naval procedure, I may repeat a story told me by the agent of one of the great European naval contractors. The Chinese sent an Armstrong cruiser to carry troops along the coast of Formosa, a very costly and complicated vessel, instead of chartering a common merchant steamer. Her captain ran her promptly upon a rock and stove in her lower bottom; then he steamed down to Hongkong and had her examined, the double bottom being full of water. To escape the consequences of their mishap, the admiral and commander determined to pay for the repairs themselves; so they told the dock company that if the vessel could be put right for 15,000 dols. she might go into dock. But the company replied that so far as they could judge from their divers' reports, the cost would be at least 40,000 dols. So the vessel steamed away to Tientsin just as she was, and was docked at Port Arthur. "But the dock," continued my informant, "was so built that when the water was let in, the pumping-house was submerged, and they could not get the water out again, so there the ship lay and rusted for I don't know how long."

While the French fleet was off Tamsui, the 27-centimetre Krupp guns in one of the shore batteries had been trained upon the *Gallissonnière* at 1,000 yards range for several days. At the first French shot all the Chinese artillerymen fled, except one, who succeeded in discharging three guns before a shot struck him and blew his head off. One of the shells he fired pierced the ship, and remained imbedded in the wood-work, failing to explode. The vessel went to Hongkong, where with infinite

precautions the shell was removed and opened. It had been manufactured at the Foochow Arsenal, and contained—charcoal! The maker had, of course, been paid for gunpowder and had pocketed the difference.

The Japanese were blamed in many quarters for threatening to withdraw their promise to treat Shanghai as a neutral port, if the Kiangnan Arsenal did not cease its operations. The Chinese replied that the arsenal was only a very small affair, and its output unimportant. This is not the case. It consists of an engine department, capable of turning out marine engines up to 3,000 h.p.; an iron ship and boiler yard, containing a slip upon which has been built an iron cruiser of 2,000 tons, with a speed of 14 knots; a small-arms factory, manufacturing Remington rifles, the production of which is given by the Chinese at 200 per week, though under efficient superintendence this figure could be raised to 1,000; an iron and brass foundry, which has turned out castings up to 30 tons each; a projectile department, under a superintendent from Elswick, with capabilities of 5 tons a day, ranging from the 6-pounder shell for field guns up to the 800-pound shell for the Krupps; an ordnance department, capable of turning out guns up to 40 tons, with boring and turning lathes by a dozen different European makers; a steam hammer which strikes a blow of 135 foot-tons; and a furnace which will admit work 100 feet long. When I visited this arsenal there was an 8-inch gun of 12½ tons and 35 calibres, mounted on a hydro-pneumatic disappearing carriage, which had been entirely constructed at Kiangnan, and eight similar ones were in course of manufacture. The superintendent of this department, an Englishman of great skill and administrative talent—Mr. N. E. Cornish, from Elswick—had turned out in two years twenty-two 8-inch guns, eight 6-inch guns, and one 9-inch gun. Not far away are powder-works and cartridge factories, under native superintendence, with capacities respectively of one ton and 10,000 cartridges per day; but the quality of the output had fallen off so seriously since the foreign

employees had been dismissed, that grave doubts were expressed as to whether it would be of any use at all. I give these details not only as an example of the falsehoods that the Chinese put forward and which find acceptance among foreigners, but also as a striking proof of the fact that the ability to produce all the implements of warfare has not prevented the Chinese from experiencing a humiliating defeat, on the first occasion that they have been seriously attacked during the last twenty-five years. Unless the character of the Chinese Government can be vitally changed, all the guns and ships in the world will not save them.

The Canton River can now be blocked against the most powerful fleet at a few hours' notice, and the story of how this came to be done is a curious one. The British Consul went one day to a former Viceroy of the province to protest against the partial barrier which then existed, as a great obstacle to trade. "Moreover," he said, "it is not of the least real use to keep out an enemy, as a foreign fleet could destroy it without the least difficulty." The Viceroy listened with interest, promised to give the matter his best consideration, and the moment the Consul had left his Yamên he issued instructions to his foreign naval instructor to replace the old barrier by one which could not be destroyed. Accordingly a number of huge iron piles were driven in, and these when filled with stones in war-time would constitute an impenetrable obstacle. The river, too, is very strongly defended by forts of the latest pattern, heavily armed. As a matter of fact, however, all these precautions are useless, because no enemy would think of attempting to force the entrance to the river in face of them. A strong force would be landed, would advance overland, occupy Canton, re-establish peace there, collect the duties of the richest city in China, and with this revenue to pay all military and naval expenses, war with China could be carried on for ever at a profit.

To Captain Lang, R.N., as I have said, is due almost all that there is of good in the Chinese navy of to-day, and if the Japanese war had taken place immediately after his retirement,

the Chinese ships would undoubtedly have given a much better account of themselves. The universal testimony of people in China is that since Captain Lang left, the Chinese fleet has gone to the dogs as fast as possible. He was, as every conscientious British officer under the same circumstances would have been, too much of a *détailliste* for the Chinese. He probably made a mistake in accepting an executive position—no foreign officer should do that with the Chinese. He should have been merely adviser, with more or less power to get his advice insisted upon. "Captain Lang," said a Chinese commander, "is quite right to tell me about my ships and my guns, but he need not come and look at my water-closets." An arrangement under which an experienced officer of the British navy, and Ting Ju-ch'ang, who, on passing a Chinese literary examination, was made a cavalry officer and thence promoted to command the Northern Squadron, were placed nominally upon an equal footing as "Admirals," was destined to break down sooner or later. The strain which finally destroyed it came when the fleet was in harbour somewhere in Northern China. Admiral Ting went away as usual, whereupon the senior Chinese commodore hoisted his flag. Captain Lang immediately sent him orders to haul it down. He refused to do so, and Captain Lang thereupon telegraphed to the Viceroy, who replied ambiguously through the commodore. Captain Lang then went ashore with all his belongings, and sent in his resignation, which was instantly accepted. It is understood that the Admiralty refused permission for any British officer to replace him. Indeed they could not do otherwise; and the fate of Captain Lang should make it clear that no foreigner who is not prepared to pocket the indignities along with the salary should accept a post in the Chinese navy.

It may be supposed that the utter collapse of the Chinese navy in the war with Japan came as a surprise to the Chinese, and particularly to the Chinaman who has had the chief influence in creating it. On the contrary, I have had in my hand a

detailed and most crushing indictment of the Chinese navy, written less than five years ago, which was handed personally to Li Hung-chang by one of his highest foreign advisers. In order to strike his imagination, this was drawn up in the form of an imaginary account of what had happened to the Chinese in a naval war—a species of Chinese "Battle of Dorking," in fact. The Chinese ships, it said, were entirely unprovided with stores, such as oil and patent packing, and these could not be obtained nearer than Shanghai. When a merchant ship arrives bringing them, it has to go to Port Arthur, at that time the only defended Chinese port where any of the Pei-yang Squadron, except gunboats, could go. But Port Arthur is not large enough to accommodate the whole squadron, so that while the cruisers are taking on board coal and stores, the ironclads must remain outside. Then the enemy blockades Niuchwang and Taku, because there are no torpedo boats there. The Chinese officers are so nervous under fire, from having had no torpedo practice at night, that they fire torpedoes at eight hundred yards. But the squadron has no reserve of either good men, coal, stores, or provisions, and on the outbreak of war it is too late to procure them. The Chinese engineers are afraid of using forced draught, and when they try to do so the boiler-tubes leak. The *Chao Yang* is rammed, because her turning circle is so great and her manœuvring power so small. (This prophecy was strikingly fulfilled, as the *Chao Yang* ran on shore while manœuvring in the battle of the Yalu.) The enemy land a large force to the eastward of Talien-wan Bay, entrench themselves strongly, and cut off all supplies from Port Arthur, which ought to be provisioned for a year but is not, and starve it out in two months. Finally, said this report, an enemy with a smaller or even an equal naval force, would thrash China, and take Port Arthur and keep it. This report was written primarily to procure for the navy the money to buy stores and supplies. It had, however, no appreciable effect, and a disastrous war has been needed to demonstrate how well-founded were the criticisms it embodied.

The war has confirmed more than the severest critic has ever said of the *personnel* of the Chinese army. An eye-witness has described how the "picked troops" embarked at Tientsin on board the *Kowshing* were dressed in blouses, wore "thigh-pads," carried old rifles, and were provided with an executioner to each regiment! The discipline of these troops was such that they promptly mutinied as soon as they thought themselves in danger, and the first time they used their rifles was upon their own comrades who were saving themselves by swimming. Of desertions and consequent beheadings we have already heard more than enough. Both before and after being defeated, the Chinese troops outraged and plundered the peasantry of the districts to which they were despatched, until the Japanese were welcomed as deliverers in Manchuria, while in China the refugees asked the nearest way to a foreign settlement, knowing that there alone would they be safe. The Rev. John Ross, a well-known missionary and author, has stated that on the way to Mukden "every part traversed by the Chinese army has been stripped of its vegetation, and resembles fields over which locusts have passed, so complete is its devastation." When the last mail arrived from the Far East the first batches of Chinese prisoners were reaching Japan. The *Kobe Herald* says of four hundred of them: "If these are samples of the Chinese regular troops we must admit that they are a poor, miserable crowd, being without exception as ragged, dirty, and puny a collection of human beings as it has ever been our lot to inspect." And the Tokyo correspondent of the *Times* writes of seven hundred that arrived there: "It would be difficult to conceive a dirtier, less formidable-looking lot of men. They appear to have been collected from the highways and byways without any regard to age—some are in their teens, others in their fifties—or any thought of physical capacity." The Chinese have taken very few prisoners, but those they have treated according to their usual habit. At the beginning of the war I warned foreign correspondents that they must on no account be taken alive by the

Chinese, and Marshal Yamagata afterwards gave the same advice to his troops. After impressing upon them that only those Chinese who bore arms were the enemies of Japan, and that mercy to the conquered and kindness to prisoners must be absolutely shown under all circumstances, he proceeds: "The Chinese have, from ancient times, ever been endowed with the cruellest and most merciless dispositions; therefore, if during a battle a warrior by any chance falls into their hands, he is sure to suffer the most pitiless treatment by them, to which death is far more preferable; in the end even he will be put to death with savage ferocity. It follows that in whatsoever circumstances a soldier should avoid being taken alive, and should rather in such a case die gallantly, manifesting by such a death the warrior spirit of Japan and perfecting the fame of our heroic ancestry." His warning has been justified by events. The first thing that the Japanese found inside Port Arthur was a number of headless and mutilated bodies of their comrades, and the correspondent of the *Times* whom I have already quoted, writes: "The Chinese take no prisoners. From dead, wounded, and vanquished alike they shear off the heads, mutilate them in various ways, and string them together by a rope passed through the mouth and gullet. The Japanese troops have seen these ghastly remnants of their comrades. A barrel full of them was found after the fight at Ping-Yang, and among the horrible trophies was the head of a young officer who had fallen wounded in a fort evacuated by General Oshima's men."

Having been thoroughly beaten, the Chinese have decided to "reform" the organisation of their army, and how have they set about it? At the head of the organisation of reform they have placed Chang Chih-tung, the notorious foreigner-hater, the instigator of the murders of missionaries, the Viceroy who was recently disgraced for defying Imperial orders from Peking. Better than this, however, they have associated with Captain von Hanneken, who is to be the chief foreign adviser, with the

rank of General, a certain Hanlin scholar named Hu Ching-kuei. That is, a man who represents above all things the old Chinese literary culture—an official of the Hanlin Yuan, or "Imperial Academy," which is the most conservative institution in China, and attaches more importance to the propriety of an ideograph than to all the Western knowledge in the world. The farce of Chinese "reform" could not be better illustrated.

To conclude, the truth is that like almost everything else in China, her offensive and defensive power is a sham. The offspring of corruption and bombast is inefficiency. The Viceroy Li said to me that along the thousands of miles of the frontier between China and Russia, the former was strong and the latter was weak. Yet a considerable proportion of the troops in Northern China is armed with flint-locks, gingals, and bows and arrows, and skill with the bow is still considered a most desirable military art. Gordon, with his habitual frankness, told Li that for China to think of fighting Russia was "sheer madness." And even Captain Lang, in the interview from which I have already quoted, declared that "when under arms, one-half of the Chinese army is made up of savages." A force made up half of coolies, torn from their homes, afraid of their weapons, clamouring for their pay, driven forward by the lash, punished by the headsman's knife; and half of uncontrollable savages, defiers of their own officers, insulters of foreigners, plunderers of peasantry, torturers of prisoners, murderers of missionaries, outragers of women, mutilators of the dead, is not the kind of army with which Englishmen should desire to stand shoulder to shoulder, and the sooner we learn to look for our Eastern alliance elsewhere than in China, the better.

CHAPTER XIX.

CONCERNING THE PEOPLE OF CHINA.

THE more one learns about China, the less confident become one's opinions about it. The first result of experience and study of this extraordinary people and this vast land is to teach that any sweeping generalisation is almost necessarily untrue. Every individual Chinaman is a mass of contradictions; the gulf between the theory of Chinese government and its practical administration is not to be bridged; the geographical differences of the country are greater even than those of the United States; the variations of race are almost equal to those of India; to the Chinaman of the south the Chinaman of the north is a foreigner, a person speaking a different language, and usually an enemy; to the Chinaman of the far west the central authority of the east is an alien and an incomprehensible dominion; at any moment an army could be raised in one part of China to operate against another part; public feeling or community of sentiment is unknown. In fact, there is no such thing as "China."

The wisest remark ever made by a foreigner setting out to write about things Chinese, was, in my opinion, that which Mr. George Wingrove Cooke, the special correspondent of the *Times* with Lord Elgin's mission, prefixed to the reprint of his letters. He said:—

> I have, in these letters, introduced no elaborate essay upon Chinese character. It is a great omission. . . . The truth is, that I have written several very fine characters for the whole Chinese race, but having the misfortune to have the

people under my eye at the same time with my essay, they were always saying something or doing something which rubbed so rudely against my hypothesis, that in the interest of truth I burnt several successive letters. I may add that I have often talked over this matter with the most eminent and candid sinologues, and have always found them ready to agree with me as to the impossibility of a Western mind forming a conception of Chinese character as a whole. These difficulties, however, occur only to those who know the Chinese practically: a smart writer, entirely ignorant of his subject, might readily strike off a brilliant and antithetical analysis, which should leave nothing to be desired but Truth.*

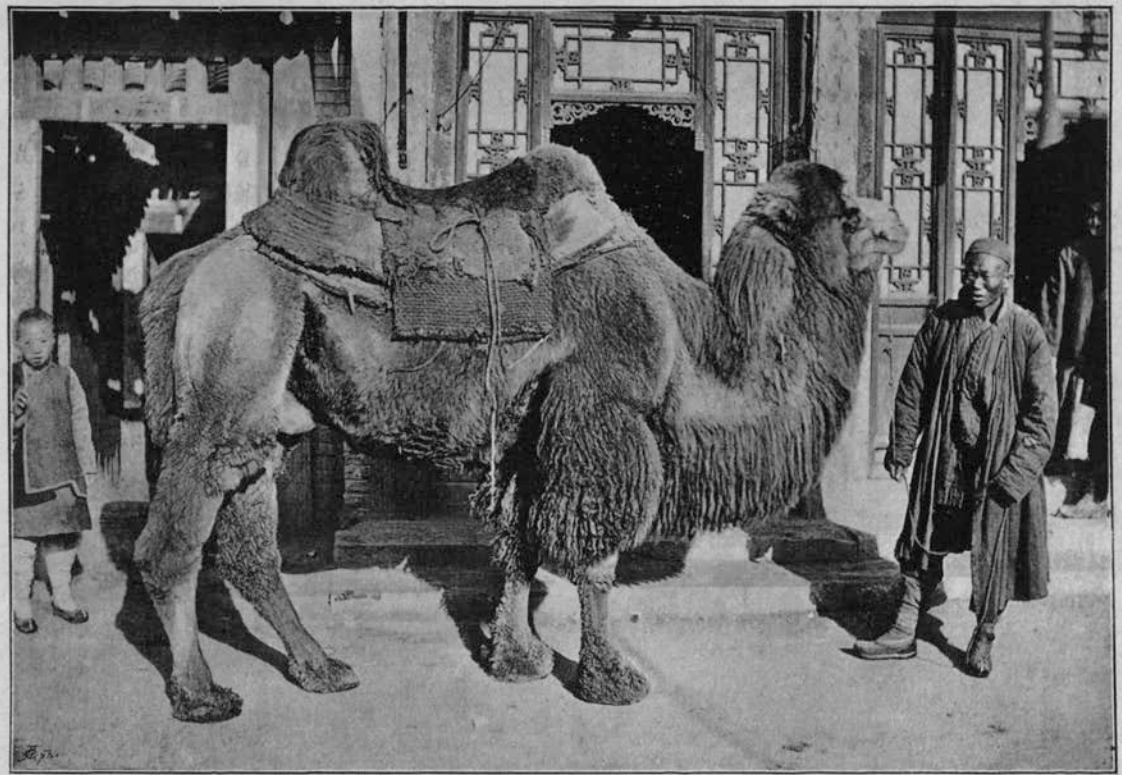
This book is old, long out of print, and forgotten, but between the soiled and antique covers of my copy I find more common sense about China, and more appreciation of what should be the attitude of Europeans towards it, than in almost all the works—with the exception of Professor Douglas's volume just published—that have been written since. And if I may say so without being misunderstood, I would add that to learn what China is not, and what should not be our relations with it, one has but to look at contemporary European opinion, and to examine the actions of the British Foreign Office for the last ten years. In writing of the people of China I shall certainly not attempt the foolish task of including them all within the limits of any definition, or laying down any rule about Chinese character without exceptions. But there are so many mistakes prevalent concerning China, and so many errors in dealing with her have been made, that it is both easy and imperative for any one who has seen under the least corner of the veil which conceals her, to point out some of these as vigorously as he may.

By way of breaking ground for what is to follow, I may pause for a moment to give an illustration or two of the difference between Chinese and Western views upon a single point, and the consequent extreme difficulty in the way of our comprehension of this people. Take, for instance, the subject of human life. A foreign resident of Peking who speaks Chinese well was riding along one day and came to an excited crowd. Drawing near, he discovered a circle of people quietly watching a man desperately

* George Wingrove Cooke, "China: being *The Times* Special Correspondence from China in the years 1857-58," London, 1858, p. vii.

attempting to commit suicide by dashing his head against a wall. He dismounted, restrained the man, harangued the bystanders, and learned that this was a coolie who claimed that his payment for a certain porter's job was short by ten cash—less than a penny—and as the employer refused to pay more he was proceeding to take revenge by killing himself on the spot, knowing that by so doing he would get the other into considerable trouble. On another occasion a man threw himself into the canal, but was dragged out. So he simply sat down on the edge and starved himself to death, to be revenged against somebody who had cheated him. Again, one day a man was found murdered on a bridge near the British Legation. The law of China prescribes that a murdered body must not be removed till the murderer is caught. Therefore it was covered with a mat and left. Days passed and a month and still the rotting body lay there, till at last the Minister, who had to pass it every day, vigorously protested, and it was taken off the bridge and placed a little further away. And a Chinese newspaper is responsible for this story, which indeed has nothing whatever incredible about it. One day a sow belonging to a Mrs. Fêng happening to knock down and slightly injure the front door of a Mrs. Wang, the latter at once proceeded to claim damages, which were refused. Whereupon a fierce altercation ensued, which terminated in Mrs. Wang's threatening to take her own life. Mrs. Fêng, upon hearing of this direful threat, resolved at once to take time by the forelock, and steal a march upon her enemy by taking her own life, and thus turn the tables upon her. She accordingly threw herself into the canal.

This merely by way of illustration. First of all, as I said of the Grand Secretary Li, most foreigners are wofully wrong in regard to the feelings of all Chinese towards peoples of other nations. So far from the Chinese growing more sympathetic in consequence of greater commercial intimacy, they are undoubtedly growing more hostile. "The ruling and influential classes still only tolerate our presence in the country; and I



THE MONGOL IN PEKING.

firmly believe they would hail the day when they could see (were such a thing possible) the last foreign factory razed to the ground and the last ship dismissed the coast, in spite of the loss to the national revenue and the ruin of the districts dependent on our trade that would certainly ensue." * This was written twelve years ago, but it is absolutely true to-day. I have said that the sights of Peking are not nearly so accessible to foreigners to-day as they were a few years ago. And it is the testimony of most of the foreign residents that their treatment by the Chinese grows worse each year, and that they are less safe in the streets. The closing of the top of the wall to pedestrians is the last act of petty unpleasantness. There was no reason whatever for this except to deprive the foreigners of their only decent walk. Another example is that the Marchioness Tsêng, when first she returned from Europe, used to have an afternoon "at home" once a week, like European ladies. This gave, however, such deep offence in all Chinese quarters that she was compelled to cease. A Chinese lady, again, who had been in Europe, called upon two European ladies who were visiting Peking. Next day, desiring to be polite, they returned her call. Immediately afterwards they received a message from her begging them never to come to her house again. So, too, if you begin to study Chinese with a teacher in Peking and you happen to meet him in the street, do not expect the least sign of recognition. He will cut you dead, and then come next morning to apologise and explain that it would be very unpleasant for his family if he were seen bowing to a foreigner. He will teach you and take your dollars: he will not greet you. And the Abbé Favier, the finest specimen of a priest I have ever met, a *beau sabreur* of the church, who wears Chinese dress and his hair in a queue, who speaks Chinese perfectly, who has even been decorated with a sapphire button by the Emperor, told me that he had just received the most remarkable honour and recognition of his whole life in China. He met the Governor

* Medhurst, "The Foreigner in Far Cathay," 1872, p. 177.

of the city in his official chair, and the great man positively bowed to him, to the stupefaction of the lookers-on. "Il m'a salué, Monsieur—comme ça!" And while I was in Peking, H.R.H. Prince Henry of Bourbon (Comte de Bardi) desired very much to see the Temple of Heaven, which had been closed to foreigners for several years. Accordingly the German Minister (he was travelling, of course, with an Austrian passport) applied to the Tsungli Yamên for special permission for his distinguished guest. After some delay it was granted, as some say only after the Marquis Tsêng had carried the request to the Empress herself, and an appointment was made. The Prince and his party, accompanied by the Secretary of the German Legation, rode out to the gates of the Temple and only succeeded in passing the outer one after long discussion and altercation. The next gate was still more difficult, and after an hour's parley the keepers agreed to let the men of the party in, if the Princess would go back into the street and wait for them. This was too much, and the whole party naturally left in indignation. The German Minister sent a formal and vigorous complaint to the Tsungli Yamên, and after a while he received a sort of apology and expression of regret at the misunderstanding. But the exclusion was undoubtedly deliberate and according to orders received. The Ministers could not well meet the request with a flat refusal, but they took care that the permission should have no value.

"As for any moral influence that foreigners may exercise by their presence in the country, it may be regarded as simply *nil*." I believe this to be absolutely true. The reader may naturally be inclined to reply that in the face of many years of devoted missionary work and the large sums of money that are yearly subscribed in England to support this, such a statement is incredible. My answer is, that from the missionaries themselves come some of the strongest testimonies in support of the assertion of declining foreign influence. I once asked a Roman Catholic priest whom I met in China, and of whose

knowledge and character I formed the highest opinion, if he believed that the result of missionary enterprise would result, even in the fulness of time, in anything that could be remotely described as the Christianising of China. "Jamais!" he replied, emphatically. "Then," said I, "why are you here?" "I am here," he replied, "simply in obedience to the command to preach the Gospel to all peoples. Like the soldiers in the ranks I obey the orders of my commander, without understanding in the least what good is to come of them." Yet no missionary who has been in China for centuries has achieved such extraordinary victories or has a position of so much power as this man. To pass from Roman Catholic to Protestant testimony, in September, 1888, the Rev. A. Williamson, D.D., read a paper at Chefoo on "Missionary Organisation in China." He said: "The startling, though it is not the most serious, aspect of the question is that not only is heathenism extending, but immorality is increasing in all directions. . . . Those of us who have lived long in China see the evil spreading before our eyes, especially in and around our great emporiums, with an ever-widening area every year. The Chinese are learning evil faster than they are learning good. They are adding foreign vices to their own, aping foreign free-living and habits, often in the most powerful manner; and the fact is, that in and around our centres of commerce they are less honest, less moral, and less susceptible to the preaching of Divine Truth than formerly by a long way." And again: "Further, we are not rising in the respect or esteem of the Chinese as we expected. A few years ago there was a general sense of satisfaction among us at the attitude shown towards us by many, both officials, wealthy civilians, and literary men. Now a change is perceptible in all directions. They respect us less than they used to do, receive our visits less readily. We find it more difficult to rent or buy houses, and so on." Another Protestant missionary—the Rev. William Ashmore, D.D., of the American Baptist Mission—in an article in the *New York Examiner*, wrote as follows: "Already

the revulsion from the old, kindly feeling towards America has begun. Now they are learning to *hate* us. It is passing from mouth to mouth, from village to village, from province to province, from ruler to ruler, from prince to prince, from beggar to beggar, until we can contemplate the possibility of an epidemic of ill-will extending over a fourth part of the whole human race." After these witnesses I shall hardly be accused of prejudice in making the same assertions. I will add, however, one weighty piece of official testimony recently given on this characteristic of contemporary China. In his review of the volume of Customs Reports for last year the British Minister to China forwards, and therefore approves, a report written by one of his subordinates which concludes with these striking words: "I hardly venture to make any comments of my own upon the pages which I have reviewed; but in one word I consider that the conclusion of the whole matter inevitably is that the trade conducted by foreigners in China has made but little progress during the ten years 1882–91; that it does not promise any immediate or considerable advance; and that foreign interests and influence therein have decreased and deteriorated to an appreciable extent." *

The character of Chinese officialdom is probably more familiar to European readers than the diverse characteristics of the Chinese people, and therefore less need be said about it. Every Chinese official, with the possible exception of one in a thousand, is a liar, a thief, and a tyrant. This may be doubted in Europe, but it is recognised as an almost inevitable fact by every Chinaman, and volumes could easily be filled with examples of it. It is well known, for instance, that the larger part of the sums subscribed in England on one occasion for the relief of the famine districts in China found its way into

* Mr. Beauclerk's report upon the volume of "Decennial Reports," 1882-91, published by the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs, forwarded to the Foreign Office by Mr. O'Conor, H.B.M. Minister to China. F. O., 1894, Misc. Series, No. 330, p. 38.

the pockets of the army of Chinese officials. I learned of one instance of this which would be vastly amusing if it were concerned with a less painful subject. Some time ago the turbulent Chinese of Canton attacked the foreign settlement of Shameen and plundered and destroyed the houses of the resident foreigners. For this the Chinese Government was, of course, compelled to pay an indemnity. At the time, however, the London Mansion House Famine Relief Fund had opportunely been collected and forwarded to China, and this sum was in large part devoted to paying the Shameen indemnity! One of my illustrations, by-the-way, shows instructively the conditions upon which foreigners reside in safety in certain parts of China. Shameen is separated by a species of moat from the native city of Canton, and access to it can only be had across a bridge which is barred by iron gates and held by a posse of Chinese soldiers. My two friends who were good enough to stand before my camera on this bridge, with the Chinese soldiers by their side and the Cantonese mob held back, like wild beasts, behind the bars, furnish a typical example of the relations of Chinese and foreigners at the present day. But to return to the subject of Chinese officialdom. One relief fund was so carefully safeguarded by Europeans that the officials were thwarted in their efforts to obtain it, and the Administrator (Mr. Bruce) wrote: "In a country where corruption and bribery are indispensable in all business—where in the case of distributing charity it is a large proportion for one-third of the original contributions to reach those for whom they are designed —the practically complete absence of 'squeezing' in this relief, would seem to the natives to be a marvel." By order of the Emperor certain districts stricken by famine were to be exempted from taxation, and proclamations announcing this were to be posted up. An Imperial decree, however, published some time afterwards, declares the Emperor's abhorrence of what he had learned of the way his orders had been carried out, since "the lists of the districts for which exemption from the

tax is claimed are too often falsified, and what is worse, the officials take care not to post the Imperial proclamation until they have collected the tax in full. The revenue is lost to the state and goes into the pockets of the hangers-on about the yamêns." To the common people, adds the *Hongkong Daily Press*, from which I take the above, "lekin stations are 'squeeze stations' pure and simple, and yamêns are places to be avoided by every possible means. That the mandarins should practise extortion is looked upon as quite a natural circumstance, quite as natural, in fact, as that the people should evade payment of legal dues when opportunity offers. On both sides common honesty is held in more or less contempt, and a man who does not take advantage of his opportunities is regarded as a fool." As a matter of fact, in spite of the Emperor's pious indignation, it was a common occurrence for the tax-gatherer to follow the distributor of relief and seize upon the money as soon as it had been given. The subscriptions to relieve the starving Chinese were, unfortunately, but another example of mistaken foreign benevolence. From three of the distressed provinces grain was actually being exported while foreign relief was being given, and the foreigners' money merely caused the return of thousands of natives to a district wholly incapable of supporting them. The Rev. Mr. Candlin wrote that there was room for the refugees in other districts, where they could always get food and generally work, while they were worse than useless when they returned and hung about the famine region, subsisting on the missionaries' doles. Mr. Consul Allen, in a report written a few years ago, gave some striking instances of the failure of promising Chinese commercial undertakings, simply because of their connection with officials. Referring to the China Merchants' Steam Navigation Company, he says: "This is a powerful organisation enough, with a large fleet of river and sea-going steamers, and it might be supposed that the China Merchants' Company was a most flourishing concern. No doubt it is, but its connection with

the Government is felt by the trading class to be an effectual bar to its ever becoming the lucrative association that an unhampered and free trading company could be, and its scrip shows this." A Chinese company was started to develop the mines of Yünnan, and the prospectus declared that the enterprise promised fabulous riches. An official of high rank was to be placed in charge of the operations, and shareholders were promised a minimum dividend of 6 per cent., with various bonuses. But, says Mr. Allen, "the shares in the company are not eagerly taken up. The Chinese distrust all official connection with mercantile enterprise, alleging that all the profits earned go into the pockets of the mandarins, while the man who has no claims to official rank is left out in the cold. Europeans, of course, will not touch such a speculation. The risk is altogether too great."

The *Hupao*, a vernacular Chinese newspaper in which there is often much frank information about China, mingled with superstition and ignorance, reproduced once a proclamation from the Provincial Treasurer of Kwangtung, in which he said that the priest in charge of the Temple at Canton pays as much as from 7,000 taels to 10,000 taels for the post, recouping himself afterwards for his original outlay by all manner of extortions from the worshippers. Thus they are not allowed to bring in their incense-sticks or candles, but must buy these from the priest inside at ten times their value. They must also pay an exorbitant hire for space on the mats on which they perform their prostrations; and women are persuaded by the priest that a night's sleep on the mats in the temple, for which they pay a heavy hotel bill to the priest, will ensure them male progeny. An amusing light is thrown upon Chinese ideas by a story told me of Sir Harry Parkes. He once arrested several mandarins, and kept them for a fortnight. All their friends were allowed access to them, but they were not permitted to leave the house. After a few days he sent to inquire how they were getting on. "We cannot sleep at night," they said, "for the dreadful heavy

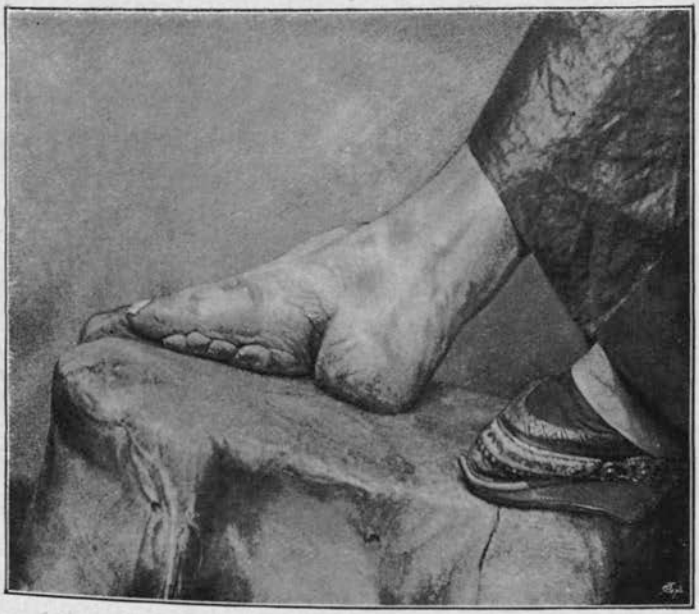
tread of the sentry round the Yamên. Our own watchmen come and clap, and then they go to sleep; and we have waited night after night for yours to do the same, that we might get away. But he never stops!" So the sentry was told to stand still. A foreign mining engineer in charge of important Chinese mines, told me that he had eighty soldiers under him armed at first with percussion-cap guns, and afterwards with sniders. On one occasion he placed an armed sentry by the boiler to prevent the miners drying dynamite upon it, which they were constantly trying to do. The sentry went to sleep on the boiler; a boy brought a box of dynamite and placed it there; it exploded and blew up the whole place, including the sentry. Occasionally his soldiers were all allowed to drill, when the officers sat in their quarters half a mile away, with their red flags in front of them, and looked on. This expert foreigner—he was not an Englishman—added: "If you could take away from the English artisan his present character, and substitute for it the Chinese character, in six months English industries would be at a standstill, and in ten years the accumulated wealth of England would have disappeared." A correspondent of the *Times* recently told a capital and thoroughly characteristic story of Chinese officialdom, to the effect that about ten years ago some of our politicals had a meeting on the Sikkim frontier with some of the officials from Thibet. In the course of conversation some reference was made to our last war with China, ending in the occupation of Peking and the destruction of the Summer Palace. "Yes," said the Thibetan officials, laughing, "we know you said you went there, and we read with much amusement your gazettes giving your account of it all. They were very cleverly written, and we daresay deceived your own subjects into a belief that you actually went to Peking. We often do the same thing."

The most illuminating of my examples, however, of the natural mind of the official Chinaman came from my own personal experience. When in Peking I visited the Tungwen College, an institution where Chinese students are instructed in foreign

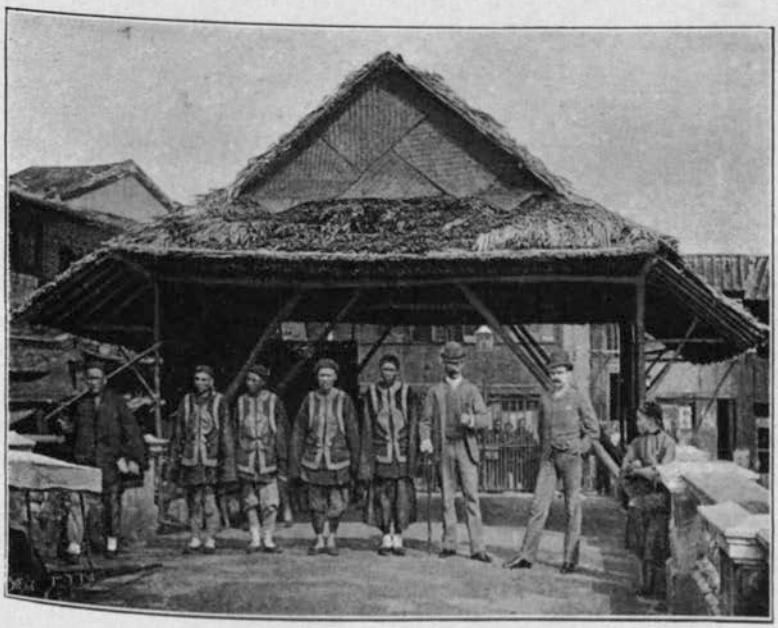
languages, literature, and science, by foreign masters, a small monthly allowance being given them by the Chinese Government for regular attendance. I was shown a class of young Chinese engaged in writing essays in French upon the subject of "Protection and Free Trade." As a specimen of their work, the composition of one named Tok-kun was taken from his desk and handed to me. It was wholly an original production, and I venture to think that the following passage, which I copied exactly, throws a vivid light upon the point of view of the would-be Chinese official after a number of years of foreign teaching: "Ce qu'il y a de mauvais et de terrible à l'Etranger, c'est que le peuple forme des partis qui se mêlent de politique, je suis enchanté de l'ignorance des affaires d'Etat des Chinois, qui, s'ils s'y entendaient seraient certainement libre échangistes, car nous achetons beaucoup plus que nous ne vendons. Notre Gouvernement, profitant de cette ignorance du peuple, peut augmenter les droits de douane à sa fantaisie, cela ne fait aucun tort aux commerçants, mais beaucoup aux acheteurs, qui ne comprennent pourquoi. Les marchandises venant de l'Etranger, augmentent de prix tous les jours, et ne cherchent pas du tout à comprendre pourquoi. Ils paient sans se plaindre du Gouvernement, c'est heureux pour la Chine."

Dirt, falsehood, corruption, and cruelty are some of the least objectionable of Chinese vices. Of the last-named I have drawn a moderate picture in a previous chapter, but the following description of what the Abbé Huc saw when travelling once in the Interior may be added:—"Le chariot avança, et nous vîmes, en frissonnant d'horreur, une cinquantaine de cages, grossièrement fabriquées avec des barreaux de bambou et renfermant des têtes humaines. Presque toutes étaient en putréfaction et faisaient des grimaces affreuses. Plusieurs cages s'étant disloquées et disjointes, quelques têtes pendaient accrochées aux barreaux par la barbe ou les cheveux, d'autres étaient tombées à terre, et on les voyait encore au pied des arbres. Nos yeux ne purent soutenir longtemps ce hideux et dégoûtant spectacle."

The Taotai of Ningpo recently issued a proclamation to agriculturists which contained the following admirable sentiments:— "Frogs are produced in the middle of your fields; although they are little things they are little human beings in form. They cherish a life-long attachment to their native soil, and at night they melodiously sing in concert with clear voices. Moreover they protect your crops by eating locusts, thus deserving the gratitude of the people. Why go after dark with lanterns, scheming to capture the harmless and useful things? Although they may be nice flavouring for your rice, it is heartless to flay them. Henceforward it is forbidden to buy or sell them, and those who do so will be severely punished." The cruelty of the Chinese to animals is indescribably great; hence the necessity for the inculcation of such sentiments. A friend with whom I rode a good deal in Peking told me that one day, hearing screams of laughter from his stable, he went to investigate. There he discovered that his groom and "boy" had caught a big rat, nailed its front paws to a board, soaked it in kerosine, set fire to it, and were enjoying the spectacle. But this is not so bad as one of the tricks of the professional kidnapper, who will catch a child in the street, carry it off to another town, blind it, and then sell it for a professional beggar. Their cruelty, moreover, is by no means confined to foreigners and dumb animals: they are cruel under almost all circumstances. A steam launch, built at Hongkong, blew up on her trial trip, and amongst others the wife of the editor of a Hongkong paper was thrown into the water. Some Chinese in a sampan paddled up, and positively refused to take her on board until she had promised them fifty dollars. Another member of the same party had to promise five hundred dollars before a boatman would undertake to convey several of the survivors to Hongkong. An eye-witness related to me how a junk upset off Macao, and the seven men of its crew were all drowned, though there were a dozen Chinese boats round them. While I was in Hongkong a Chinaman was terribly injured in an accident at Kowloon. His fellow-



A Chinese Lady's Foot.



The Protection of Foreigners, Canton.

workmen simply laid him in the gutter, and afterwards even refused to carry him to a steam launch sent to take him to the hospital. At one of the "dragon races" in the Canton River, 150 men were upset out of two of the long canoes, amidst a thousand other people afloat, and every one of them was drowned. One of the latest papers from China tells how a boat, paddled by two men, carrying rice from Shanghai to Pootung, capsized in the midst of a number of fishing-boats. The fishermen immediately seized upon the rice and property belonging to the capsized boat, but took not the slightest notice of the drowning men, whose bodies had so far not been found.

Foot-binding, which is practised in most of the provinces of China, and of which one of my illustrations shows the results, is a sufficient example of widespread cruelty; but the practice of infanticide is infinitely worse. Attempts have been made to deny the existence of this practice to any large extent, but proofs could be adduced by the thousand. One of the most thoughtful and instructive newspapers ever issued in China was the *Chinese Times* of Tientsin, conducted by Mr. Alexander Michie, who possessed a remarkable knowledge of Chinese life and a profound acquaintance with the Chinese mind. This paper, unfortunately, came to an end for want of foreign support a few years ago. In its columns I found the following account of infanticide in the province of Shansi. One man, who had been in the employ of a foreigner for two years and had received good wages, put his little girl to death because, as he said, he could not afford to feed her. A woman, without solicitation, told one of the foreign ladies that she had killed five children in order to go out as a nurse, and that her husband compelled her to do it. "Yes, it was a great sin," she said, "but I could not help it." A man, who passes for a gentleman, volunteered the information that he had allowed two of his girls to die for want of care. "Only a small matter. We just wrapped them up in bed-clothes and very soon they were gone. I am a poor man; girls are a great expense and earn no money, and as we already had two we con-

cluded we could not keep any more." The testimony of a Chinese teacher is as follows:—"Infanticide is very common among the poor, and even people in pretty easy circumstances. There is hardly a family where at least one child has not been destroyed, and in some families four or five are disposed of. Nothing can be done. As soon as the little ones are born they are laid aside and left to perish. Girls are more often destroyed, but boys also are very often killed. The officials know it, but say it is something they cannot control." Another man, who is now a member of the Christian Church, says that in his village there is hardly a family that has not destroyed two or three children. And once more, "a woman said that 'it was very common for poor people to go into rich families as wet-nurses because they received good wages, and in fact they often destroyed their babies that they might do so.' Such a state of things is terrible in the extreme, and the worst feature about it is that there seems to be no public or individual conscience against it: even well-informed and otherwise respectable people look upon it as a matter of course." A lady contributor to the *North China Daily News* furnished the following statistics:—"I find that 160 Chinese women, all over fifty years of age, had borne 631 sons, and 538 daughters. Of the sons, 366, or nearly 60 per cent., had lived more than ten years; while of the daughters only 205, or 38 per cent., had lived ten years. The 160 women, according to their own statements, had destroyed 158 of their daughters; but none had ever destroyed a boy. As only four women had reared more than three girls, the probability is that the number of infanticides confessed to is considerably below the truth. I have occasionally been told by a woman that she had forgotten just how many girls she had had, more than she wanted. The greatest number of infanticides owned to by any one woman is eleven." Wife-selling and child-selling are also common, and during the last famine a party of beggars were actually observed in the streets of Tientsin with baskets, loudly crying, *Mai nü-r*, "Girls for sale!" in one

of the baskets being four baby girls with pinched faces and wizened limbs.

The subject of Chinese medicine reflects the Chinese mind in a very instructive manner, but it is too large to be dealt with here. I will only say that when Sir Robert Hart recently instructed the Customs officials to prepare lists of the substances used in Chinese medicine, amongst the 1,575 entries appeared dried toads, toadspittle cake, dried snakes, liquid manure preserved for years, and various other preparations of human excrement, the genitals of different animals, deer fœtus, the human placenta, centipedes, and the dung of different animals. Dr. Mackay of Tamsui, in Formosa, recently prepared a catalogue of Chinese prescriptions which had come under his notice, and he points out that the most repulsive and disgusting "medicines" are given to the unfortunate children. Among the remedies prescribed for diseases of children are the following:—For cough, bat's dung—name given in drug-shop, "night clear thread." For worms and yellowish face, grubs from filth washed and dried—name in drug-shop "grain sprouts." Also rabbit's dung, called "the worm-killer." For thrush, cockroach's dung—name in drug-shop "worm pearls." For bad stomach, earth-worms swallowed alive after being rolled in honey. Fever, dog's dung-prepared—the dog being first fed on rice. Eruptions, boil on upper lip, fowl's dung. If a child is frightened from any cause, prepared centipedes are given. Dr. Mackay adds that "for different diseases there are a number of worthless and filthy preparations, some of them scarcely mentionable." Some of the medicines prescribed for adults are not much better. Thus a man suffering from enlarged spleen would be ordered to take "grass of deer's stomach dried and cut in slices, skins of silkworms, lining of hen's gizzard, salted scorpions"; while another seized with colic might be asked to swallow a preparation made from horse-manure or, as an alternative, sow's excrement. I once procured from a Chinese drug-shop a typical prescription, consisting of about thirty different

drugs mixed together to be taken as a dose, and the Protector of Chinese in Hongkong asked a Chinese physician, who had been educated in Europe, to translate it for me. He returned it, however, with most of the ingredients marked, "Substance unknown."

The greatest obstacle of all to any improvement of the masses of China is their profoundly ingrained superstition; this is common alike to officials and people, to the educated and the ignorant. The Viceroy of Nankin, Liu Kun-yi, recently declared that he had suddenly recovered his health in consequence of a vow to pay for ten days' theatricals to be performed on a stage before the shrine of Prince Siang-ting, a deified prince of the seventh century. When the Viceroy Chang's new iron-works were opened at Wuchang, the Chief Commissioner went through a ceremony of sacrificial worship before the various workshops, to ward off any evil influences. There is a wind- and water-compelling dragon known as Ta Wang, and he has a temple behind the Viceroy's yamên at Tientsin called the *Ta Wang-miao*. When a boat conveying a prefect and his family was nearly overwhelmed by a sudden storm, it was evident that the boatman with his long pole had inadvertently disturbed Ta Wang. On search being made a small snake was discovered near the railway bridge, and prostrations and apologies were at once made before it, and it was conveyed with great solemnity to the temple aforesaid. This occurred on August 11, 1890. It might be thought that intimacy with foreigners would destroy such beliefs; this, however, is far from being the case. The Chinaman born and bred in Hongkong or Singapore is every bit as superstitious as the Chinaman of the mainland. As an example of this I may tell the following story. One of the oldest inhabitants and most intelligent Chinamen in Hongkong had set his heart upon having two houses in a certain terrace to live in. At last his chance came and he bought them. Then he went to his lawyer and exclaimed in delight: "I would have given three times the sum for them!" "But why, there are

plenty of better houses?" "Don't you know that house has the best *fêng-shui* of all Hongkong!" *Fêng-shui* means literally "wind and water," and refers to the geomantic or occult topographical influences. Even birth and half a lifetime under the British flag is not enough to eradicate the gross beliefs of the Chinaman. For instance, when an extensive reclamation of land at Singapore was begun by the Government, a colonial official had occasion one night to send his head-servant—a British subject and an old resident in the colony—on an errand into the town. He refused point-blank, and when asked his reason explained that no Chinaman would go down town at night for the next three nights because, as the Government were beginning their reclamation, they wanted a hundred Chinese heads to put at the bottom, and were on the look-out to catch Chinamen down-town and take their heads. During the recent plague at Hongkong placards were posted all over the city of Canton warning the people not to go to Hongkong, since their wives and children would run the risk of being chopped up by foreign doctors to make medicine out of their bones and eyes. This plague has had the effect of exhibiting the views of the Chinese mind with regard to foreigners and their ways perhaps more clearly than has ever occurred before. Mr. Sydney B. J. Skertchly, late of H. M. Geological Survey, has borne very remarkable testimony to this, and his words deserve the widest circulation and the closest attention. He says:—

"The sad fact has to be faced that some 200,000 Chinese are living voluntarily among us for the sake of the facilities the colony offers, and that they hate us, despise us, and fear us at the same time. Fifty years of British rule has taught them that we protect their lives and property better than their own countrymen, that wages and profits are better among us than in China proper, that we do not squeeze them, that our officials are not corrupt. In fine, that Hongkong is a temporary paradise where they are allowed to live as they like, to follow all their own customs, and where dollars are almost as easily earned as cash at home. They know, too, that we will educate them gratis, so that they can earn the high wages of the European clerk, and above all that when the loved dollar is netted no hungry mandarin will clamour for his share.

"In spite of all this they hate us and fear us. They acknowledge our skill as mechanics, they see our medical men and women daily minister to their wants

unselfishly; but they dread the doctor more than the plague. They are firmly convinced that we destroy pregnant women, and cut out children's eyes to make our medicines, and they are taught this by their so-called educated classes. The Chinese mind is steeped in the most soul-destroying superstition. The dread *fêng shui*, the spirits of their ancestors, the myriads of demons that throng the air, are to them active principles, and as virulent as they are active. They know every European can cast spells over them, can, with an outward show of benefit, destroy their health, and they are sure we have deliberately caused this plague, for they see it passes the European by and slays the Chinaman. No African savage is more ground down by fetish than is the Chinaman by his superstitions. The way we designed this plague is to the Chinaman proof of our diabolic powers; we made a tramway up to the Peak! This interfered with the *fêng shui* by stopping the flow of benign influences from the south and causing the evil influences to stagnate in the island. Is not this proof positive? Were not the Chinese warned of the coming evil? Was not the sun eclipsed? Did not the bamboo flower this year? Is it not an established fact that all Englishmen can see the hidden treasures in the earth? Not one in a thousand has any doubts on these subjects. . . . Then we woke up and cleared out the filth, disclosing scenes of horror that no pen can describe. We pulled down the partitions in the rooms, we removed the people from the stricken haunts, we started hospitals, we nursed the sick, we buried the dead.

"And how did the Chinamen take it all? The answer is visible as I write, in the gunboat anchored off the China town, for they threatened to fire the city. They posted placards ascribing untellable atrocities to the doctors; they hid their sick from us; they refused to go to our hospitals, they threatened to poison the water supply. The viceroy of the province allowed Canton to be placarded with atrocious libels and threats against the European settlement, and he has stated to the governor of Hongkong that he will not guarantee the safety of the foreigners living in the country, though they have a right, under treaty, to be there. They nearly killed a lady doctor last week, who was attending to a sick coolie." *

Finally, the most important because the most fundamental fact to remember about the Chinese mind, is that theory and practice bear no relation whatever to each other. Chinese literature inculcates all the virtues: Chinese life exhibits all the vices. Chinese professions—and this is the point where foreign diplomatists have so often gone astray—are everything that is desirable: Chinese practices are everything that is most convenient. "The life and state papers of a Chinese statesman," wrote Mr. George Wingrove Cooke, "like the Confessions of Rousseau, abound in the finest sentiments and the foulest deeds. He cuts off ten thousand heads, and cites a passage from Mencius about the sanctity of human life. He pockets the money given him to repair an embankment, and thus inundates a province;

* *The Times*. Letter to the Editor. August 26, 1894.

and he deplores the land lost to the cultivator of the soil. He makes a treaty which he secretly declares to be only a deception for the moment, and he exclaims against the crime of perjury." One of the chief living authorities upon China has just declared the same truth, in these words:—"There is no country in the world where practice and profession are more widely separated than in China. The empire is pre-eminently one of make-believe. From the emperor to the meanest of his subjects a system of high-sounding pretension to lofty principles of morality holds sway; while the life of the nation is in direct contradiction to these assumptions. No imperial edict is complete, and no official proclamation finds currency, without protestations in favour of all the virtues. And yet few courts are more devoid of truth and uprightness, and no magistracy is more corrupt, than those of the celestial empire." * This contrast was never more picturesquely shown than when the Emperor of China made his periodical procession with the sacred records. Here were documents of so sacred a character that hundreds of miles of roads were repaired for their passage; carried in shrines of Imperial yellow silk; escorted by high officials; preceded by the music of the Imperial band; and despatched on their journey by the Emperor in person—and yet the coolies who carried them actually jerked open the hangings of the shrines and threw in their indescribably filthy and vermin-haunted overcoats to be borne in state side by side with the boxes containing the precious records.†

My object in this chapter has been a simple one. I have attempted no complete analysis of any aspect of the Chinese character. Upon the virtues of the Chinese I have not even touched. But by describing a few of their views and vices I

* Professor Robert K. Douglas, "Society in China," London, 1894, p. iii. Professor Douglas's book tells the truth about China in so indisputable and entertaining a manner, and he speaks with so much authority, that there is very little left for any one else, especially a much more superficial inquirer like myself, to say. I have omitted from this volume much of my material about China and my experiences there, simply because Professor Douglas's work appeared a few months ago and has covered the ground finally.

† *Chinese Times*, October 27, 1888.

have sought, first, to show how little likelihood there is of the reform of China coming, as Gordon believed it would ultimately come, from the inside; and second, to make it clear that whatever change comes upon China from the outside, in consequence of recent events and the relations of foreign nations to one another, cannot be otherwise than a blessing to the Chinese people themselves.

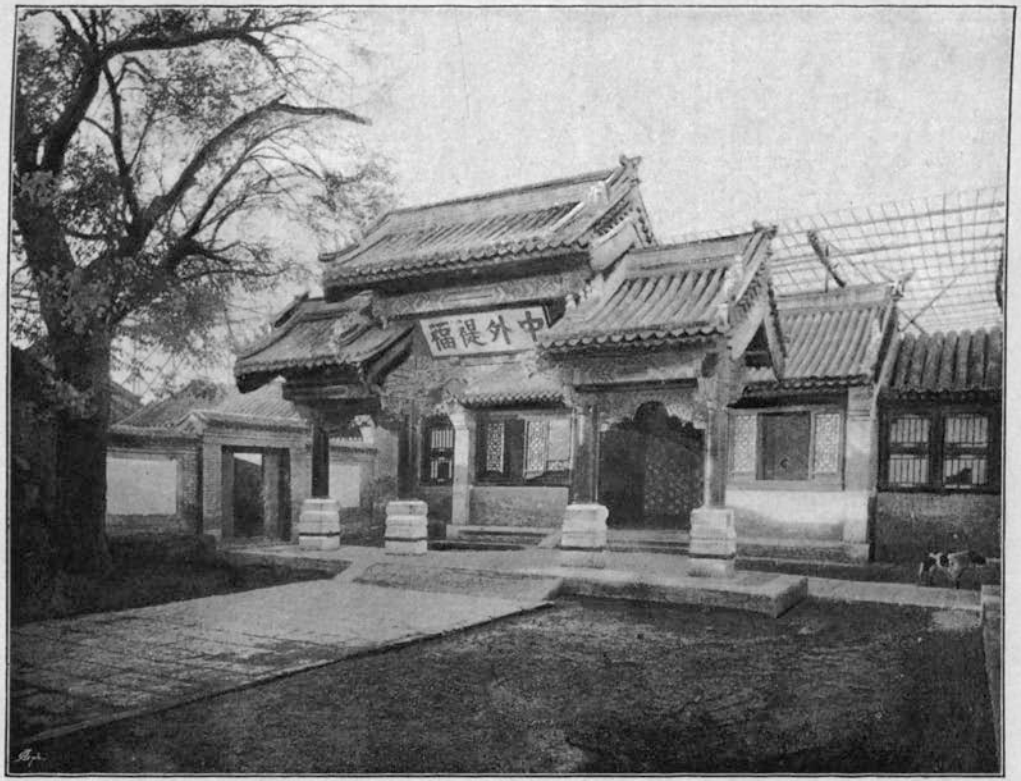
CHAPTER XX.

THE FUTURE OF CHINA.

THERE is one building in Peking which every foreign visitor should be careful to see, not because it is in any sense a "sight," but because when its history and significance are understood it affords a great object-lesson on the relations of Chinese and foreigners. It is also necessarily the focus of any discussion of the future of China. This is the Tsungli Yamên, the "Board of Foreign Affairs" for the Chinese Empire. My illustration shows its external appearance, and thereby hangs an instructive little tale. I desired permission to visit it and photograph it, and the Marquis Tsêng courteously endeavoured to procure this for me. This distinguished official, however, who was regarded by all Europe as one of the chief influences in modern China, who had negociated with half the Governments of Europe, who had set the world agog by a magazine article, and whose return to China was confidently expected to inaugurate a new era of sympathy with foreigners, was so destitute of authority in the capital of his own country and lay under so profound a suspicion of being permeated with the views of the "foreign devils," that he was actually unable to procure this small favour for me, and admitted the fact to me with his apologies. A friend thereupon applied on my behalf directly to Prince Ching, the Emperor's uncle and President of the Tsungli Yamên, who instantly granted the permission and ordered several of the secretaries to make an appointment with me there. The buildings of the Tsungli Yamên are not of a very imposing character, but they are supe-

rior to most Chinese public buildings in this respect, that they are in good repair. They consist of an external hall and a series of reception-rooms, leading finally to a small and trim Chinese garden. What they lack in appearance, however, is more than made up by the magnificence of the moral sentiments placarded upon them. The room in which I was received, and which serves, I was informed, as a reception-room for the Ministers of the foreign Powers, was a comparatively small one, containing a round table with a polished top, and a number of heavy black Chinese chairs. On one side of it were hung three scrolls, containing each a number of Chinese ideographs. The first of these reads, "When the tea is half [made] the fragrance arises." This I do not profess to interpret. Perhaps it is intended as an encouragement to persevere in the tortuous and interminable paths of Chinese diplomacy. The second declares, "To study is indeed excellent." The third, appearing where it does, can only be regarded in a humorous light. The most treacherous, untrustworthy, and unscrupulous set of diplomatists of modern times, of whom the united Ministers of foreign countries accredited to China have solemnly declared that no faith can be placed upon their assurances, meet their European colleagues beneath an inscription which reads, *Wei shan tsui lŏh*—"To do good is the highest pleasure!" In the large reception-room is the inscription, "May Heaven and Earth enjoy great peace"; while the inscription over the principal doorway, which is shown in my photograph and reproduced on the cover of this volume, is formed of the characters, *Chung wai ti fu*—literally "Centre, outside, peace, happiness"—China being the centre and the rest of the world the outside. The inscription thus means, "May China and foreign countries alike enjoy peace and happiness," an admirable sentiment, and one which the Tsungli Yamên has persistently done its best to falsify.

The future of China depends upon the relations of China and foreign countries—that is all that can be said of it with certainty.



THE TSUNG-LI YAMÊN, PEKING.

A discussion of its future therefore amounts to a discussion of the history and prospects of its foreign relations. The Tsungli Yamên, as I have said, is at the focus of these. It was founded by a remarkable man, Prince Kung, in 1861, after the war with China had come to a close and the Treaty of Tientsin was signed at the Board of Rites on October 25th, 1860, by Lord Elgin. By this treaty, foreign representatives were received at Peking, large indemnities were paid, the Roman Catholics were compensated for the destruction of their buildings, Chinese emigration was sanctioned, and Kowloon was added to Hongkong. A new era in the relations of the "centre" and the "outside" was thus inaugurated, and some new point of contact became essential. To meet this demand Prince Kung founded the Tsungli Yamên, and remained at its head until 1884, when, after rendering very great services to China, and showing himself to be a man of great sense and power, he was suddenly disgraced for the second time, and deprived of all his offices. He was succeeded by Prince Ching, who died during the present year, when to the surprise of every one, Prince Kung, after ten years of degradation and inactivity, was again appointed by the same decree President of the Tsungli Yamên, President of the Admiralty, and co-director with Li Hung-chang of the operations of war. The Tsungli Yamên consists of the President, eight Ministers, six Chief Secretaries, two Assistant Secretaries, and thirty clerks of Department apportioned as follows:—English Department six, French Department seven, Russian Department six, United States Department seven, Maritime Defence Department four; and six superintendents of current business and the Manchu Registry Department. To "Their Excellencies His Imperial Highness the Prince of Kung and the Ministers of the Tsungli Yamên" are addressed all communications from the foreign Ministers at the Court of China, and from it all Chinese representatives abroad receive their appointments and instructions. Theoretically the arrangement is an admirable one; practically, it has been an almost uninterrupted failure. If the

Chinese Ministers desired to promote foreign relations, the organisation of the Tsungli Yamên would be perfectly suited to their wish; as a matter of fact, they desire to obstruct foreign relations and have moulded their institution accordingly. In the first place, the Tsungli Yamên, while theoretically possessing supreme political authority, has not possessed it practically. The Emperor, and still more the Empress, have demanded a considerable share of personal influence upon current politics, and Li Hung-chang has always been the avowed rival of the Tsungli Yamên, and with him most foreign arrangements have been ultimately concluded. In the second place, the Tsungli Yamên has never insisted upon its own authority for the defence of foreign rights. Margary was treacherously murdered while travelling with a special safe-conduct issued by this Board, and beyond the money indemnity to his relatives, no punishment was ever dealt out to his murderers. Missionaries have been murdered on many occasions, in spite of the assurance of the Tsungli Yamên that the strictest orders for their protection had been issued. Chow Han, the well-known author of the vile anti-foreign placards, is still unpunished. Rights assigned by treaty have been deliberately suffocated under years of diplomatic correspondence. In fact, so obstructive have the Ministers of the Tsungli Yamên become of late that the foreign representatives regard it as a mere waste of time to enter upon the discussion of any point with regard to which they are not prepared to insist upon an immediate settlement, by force of arms if need be. Any Minister or Secretary of Legation who goes to the Yamên is deliberately wearied out by needless talking, ceaselessly recurring trivialities, an incredible fertility of puerile argument—one of the reasons solemnly given for delaying the treaty right of navigation of the Upper Yangtze was that the monkeys on the banks were so mischievous that they would throw stones on the deck of the steamers, and thus kill the foreigners; and finally, by grudging promises made only to be broken. Sir Harry Parkes declared that to get any definite

answer from the Tsungli Yamên was "like trying to draw water from a well, with a bottomless bucket." Whatever the Tsungli Yamên may have been created to do, it has served only to head off foreigners and postpone the satisfaction of their legitimate demands. It is to-day the great stronghold of Chinese procrastination.

Little or nothing, then, has been accomplished by this institution towards bringing China and Europe nearer together. In further support of this opinion, which will no doubt meet with much criticism, I will only refer back to the opinion of the present British Minister to China, as quoted in the preceding chapter, to the effect that foreign influence is not so great to-day as it was a few years ago. To see how small it is, take the recent example of the unprovoked murder of the two Swedish missionaries, Messrs. Wikholm and Johansson, at Sung-pu. In response to much pressure the Chinese promised to punish not only the murderers, but the officials and the Viceroy himself, all of whom were clearly among the instigators of the crime. The Swedish Consul foolishly accepted a small money indemnity, against which all his colleagues protested, and appealed to the Ministers of the Powers to make a united demand upon the Imperial Government for the execution of its promise. The Viceroy in question was Chang Chih-tung, whose offences against foreigners are legion. So far from being punished or disgraced in accordance with the undertaking given, Chang Chih-tung has received a series of distinguished honours, culminating with his appointment to the head of the scheme of Army reform. Except under direct pressure, or in an extremity of fear, the Chinese Government has never done anything to punish outrages upon foreigners. The Rev. Mr. Wylie was brutally murdered at Niuchwang by Chinese soldiers at the outbreak of the present war, and as the Chinese authorities naturally feared that any procrastination at that moment might bring the British as well as the Japanese down upon them, they promptly beheaded half-a-dozen privates and disgraced their officers. The same fear of

immediate foreign interference has just caused them to issue the following edict in Peking :—

China is under obligation to exercise extra precaution for the protection of (Christian) churches, missionaries, and other foreigners in the capital. We, as in duty bound, give stringent orders to soldiers and people that they must, as heretofore, behave amicably (towards foreigners). Let every one attend to his own business and thus he will not wantonly listen to evil rumours or join in circulating them. Should any dare to disobey orders let them instantly be seized and sent in chains to this Yamên, where they will be severely punished, no leniency being shown them. The American Missionary Headland and his wife were insulted and reviled by local roughs outside the Chi-Hua Gate. We have already severely reprimanded the local officials, and the ruffian offender, Wang Yao-erh, has been taken, and, as is right, will be severely punished by this Yamên. We further issue this proclamation in the hope that there may be everlasting mutual amity (between natives and foreigners). The local officials and police must honestly search out offenders.

If our officials had properly insisted, this would have been done, of course, years ago. So, too, the latest rumour is that the Chinese Government is prepared to make foreign nations the concession of opening two more ports to trade. They offer two, of course, under the fear that twenty may be otherwise demanded.

Now whose fault is this? The answer is easy. It is entirely due to the supine attitude of foreign Governments with regard to China, which, again, has sprung, so far as this country is concerned, chiefly from the fantastic belief that China might be a valuable ally in Asia and therefore must not be offended. The one representative we have had in Peking who really understood the Chinese and had his way with them, was Sir Harry Parkes. Sir John Walsham introduced for the first time the manners of the great world to the Court of China. With much personal charm and dignity he conducted his diplomatic relations with the Tsungli Yamên as he would have conducted them with the Foreign Offices of Paris, Berlin, or Rome. The result was total failure, unmitigated by the faintest redeeming success.

The history of the famous so-called "audience question" points the same moral. The first Ambassadors to China were required to perform the *Kotow*—knocking their heads nine times

against the ground in the Imperial presence. Lord Macartney, in 1793, refused to do this, and had an audience of the Emperor Kienlung, at which he merely bent the knee. Lord Amhurst refused to do it in 1816 to the Emperor Kia King, and had no audience. In 1873 the corps of Foreign Ministers refused either to perform the *Kotow* or to go down on one knee as Lord Macartney had done, and the Chinese Ministers accordingly arranged an interview at a place set apart for the reception of the Ambassadors of "tribute nations" like Korea. The foreign Ministers—to their disgrace be it said—fell into this trap and thus lowered the prestige of all Europeans for a generation. In 1891 "all the nations" were again received in the same place. In 1893 the British Minister was received with the same empty form, but in an Imperial temple; and during the present war he is said to have been received by the Emperor in person, within the enclosure of the Palace itself. It has thus taken a century and the dire extremity of a foreign war to enable a representative of Great Britain to be received by the Emperor of China as he would be received by any European Sovereign. As Professor Douglas says, "we have humbly implored, to use the Emperor's own words, to be admitted into the Imperial presence, and we have reaped our reward." Chinese representatives of all sorts have been accredited to the Court of St. James. They have often been men of no personal standing in their own country, but thought good enough to be foisted upon the outer barbarians. We have received them with the most elaborate honours, have accorded them the most formal and distinguished reception, and have even permitted them access, as a matter of right, into the personal presence of the Sovereign. All this time our own representatives have been snubbed, insulted, and deliberately humiliated in China, and have only been admitted into the Emperor's presence by an act of supreme condescension, accorded to them as an opportunity of laying the homage of the barbarians at the feet of the Son of Heaven. It is high time this ignoble farce came to an end.

In any consideration of the relation of Chinese and foreigners, the much-vexed Missionary Question cannot be passed over. I hold very strong opinions about this, but I will express them as briefly and as moderately as I can. I believe it to be strictly within the limits of truth to say that foreign missionary effort in China has been productive of far more harm than good. Instead of serving as a link between Chinese and foreigners, the missionaries have formed a growing obstacle. As travellers in the East well know, Oriental peoples are especially susceptible upon two points, of which their religion is the chief. We have forced the inculcation of an alien and a detested creed upon the Chinese, literally at the point of the bayonet. That very competent observer, Mr. Alexander Michie, whom I have previously quoted, sums up the results of missionary enterprise as having produced for the Chinese Government perpetual foreign coercion; for the Chinese nation, an incessant ferment of angry passions and a continuous education in ferocity against Christianity; for the foreign missionaries, pillage and massacre at intervals, followed by pecuniary indemnification—an indefinite struggle with the hatred of a whole nation, compensated by a certain number of genuine converts to their faith.* Of the truth of this, so far as concerns the attitude of the natives toward the missionary, a member of the China Inland Mission has just given striking evidence:—

> The Chi-nan-fu fop, dressed in silks and satins, flipping his sleeves in the face of a respectable foreign visitor met in the street; the middle-aged scholar, dressed as a gentleman, not thinking it beneath him to hiss out "foreign devil" or simply "devil"; young and old spitting on the ground in bitterness close to the visitor's feet, laughing right in his face, or on passing, turning sharply round and making a most hateful noise at his ear—these are some of the petty annoyances that the *literati* and gentry practise; underlings easily carry on the treatment to something more spiteful and serious than this.†

A careful distinction must be made, however, between Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries. The former enjoy, on

* "Missionaries in China," by Alexander Michie, 1891, p. 71.

† *China's Millions*, September, 1894.

the whole, far more consideration from the natives, as well as from foreigners, and the result of their work is beyond question much greater. The Roman Catholic missionary goes to China once for all; he adopts native dress, lives on native food, inhabits a native house, supports himself upon the most meagre allowance from home, and is an example of the characteristics which are as essential to the eastern idea of priesthood as to the western—poverty, chastity, and obedience. To borrow the words of Sir W. Hunter, he has "cut himself off from the world by a solemn act." More than that, he meets native superstitions half-way by amalgamating the worship of ancestors, which is a vital part of every Chinaman's belief, to the worship of the Saints; and by teaching his native converts a prayer for the Emperor of China, which concludes with the petition, "de Le conserver jusqu'à une heureuse vieillesse, en prolongeant la prosperité de Son Empire, afin que nous puissions plûtard jouir *avec Lui* de la paix éternelle." He is also subject to one authority, and preaches and practises one doctrine. The two chief grounds of reproach against him are first, that in China as elsewhere he is nearly always a political agent; and second, that many a dangerous suspicion has been aroused by his habit of paying small sums for dying children, for the purpose of baptising them *in articulo mortis*.

To any one who has read my chapter on Manila, I need not explain that I am not prejudiced in favour of the Roman Catholic propaganda; yet I should not be honest if I did not add that for the personal character and the work of many a Roman Catholic missionary whom I have met in China, I have conceived a profound respect. The Protestant missionary, on the other hand, in a majority of cases, looks upon his work as a career like another; he proposes to devote a certain amount of his life to it, and then to return home with the halo of the Christian pioneer; he has, in most cases, his comfortable house, his wife, his children, his servants and his foreign food, and it is even stated that his stipend increases with each addition to his

family. For his doctrine he is virtually responsible to nobody but himself. Whatever his own views upon the mysteries of Christianity happen to be, those he impresses upon his native hearers as the one and only truth. He is jealous of his Protestant rivals, between whom and himself there is a perpetual warfare of pious intrigue to secure converts. So far as education goes, both men and women among Protestant missionaries are often quite unfitted even to teach at home, where there would be little danger of serious misunderstanding; in their present sphere of work they are often not too hardly described by the phrase which has been applied to them—"ignorant declaimers in bad Chinese." "The Protestant missionaries who enjoy the respect of their compatriots," says one writer, "are the exception, not the rule, and owe their reputation more to sinological accomplishments than to ecclesiastical prestige."* Protestant missionary tracts are distributed bearing coarse illustrations of such Biblical incidents as the swallowing of Jonah by the whale, and the killing of Sisera by Jael. Moreover, up to the present, the Protestant missionaries have circulated the whole Bible in Chinese. They have recently seen their error, and are now considering the advisability of following in the steps of the more circumspect Roman Catholics, and withholding certain parts obviously unfit for Oriental comprehension. Their failure to do this hitherto has resulted in parodies of the most vital doctrines of orthodox Protestantism being spread all over China, of a brutality so revolting and ferocious as to be beyond all possibility of mention. Again, they reproduce in China all the petty sectarian divisions of their own country. I quote a list of these from a missionary address. There are three branches of the Episcopal Church, nine sects of Presbyterians, six sects of Methodists, two sects of Congregationalists, two sects of Baptists, besides several minor bodies. In Shanghai alone there are seven missions—the London Mission, American Presbyterian, the American Episcopal, the American Episcopal

* Balfour, "Waifs and Strays from the Far East," p. 113.

Methodists, the Church Missionary Society, the American Baptists, and the Seventh-Day Baptists. "Here, then," says the Rev. Dr. Williamson, "we have seven sets of foreign missionaries working seven different churches; seven sermons every Sunday, seven sets of prayer meetings, seven sets of communing services, seven sets of schools, two training agencies, seven sets of buildings, seven sets of expenses, four or five versions of the Bible, and seven different hymn-books at least." In the face of these facts, one is surely justified in saying that we have not yet reached a point of Christian unity which affords us any moral justification for thrusting our theological views by force of arms upon heathen nations.

I am well aware, of course, that to some missionaries the world is deeply indebted for its knowledge of the Chinese language and literature; and that among the Protestant missionaries of the present day there are some men of the highest character and devotion, upon whose careers no criticism can be passed. These, however, are a small minority. The Chinese themselves bracket missionaries and opium together as the twin curses of the country, and although it is true that among Christian converts have been men who have shown under persecution all the characteristics of the early Christian martyrs, it is equally true that the ordinary foreigner carefully avoids the employment of the native Christian in any subordinate capacity, having found by experience that in many cases he has only lost his native virtues to acquire foreign vices in their place. Conversion to Christianity is looked upon by many natives merely as a means of an easier livelihood. A friend of mine asked a Chinese servant whom he had previously known, what he was engaged in doing. He replied: "My have got that Jesus pidgin." He was no more intentionally irreverent in saying this than I am in quoting it; he merely meant that the profession of Christianity, with its comfortable concomitants, was his new occupation. Mr. Michie declares that were the alliance of the Christian nations with the military

Powers of the West to be brought to an end, a chief root of bitterness would be extracted from the Chinese mind. For my own part, I am convinced that if the subscribers to Chinese missions could only see for themselves the minute results of good and the considerable results of harm that their money produces, they would find in the vast opportunities for reformatory work at home a more attractive field for their charity. At any rate, in considering the future of China the missionary influence cannot be counted upon for any good.

The prospects of future reform in China may be estimated from the fate of her railway schemes. In 1876 the first railway in China was laid by a foreign firm from Shanghai to Wusung, where the notorious bar on the Shanghai River interrupts the traffic. It was well patronised, paid a dividend at once, and after running sixteen months was purchased by the Chinese authorities, who no sooner came into possession of it than they tore it up and shipped the materials over to Formosa. Under its energetic Governor, Liu Ming-chuan, now Commander-in-chief of the Chinese army, a railway was built in Formosa, and prospered for a time under foreign management; but the foreigners have almost all been dismissed—from 1886 to 1889 there were no fewer than six consulting "chief engineers" in succession in the Governor's service—and the working of the railway is now a farce. Six or seven years ago an Imperial edict was issued, declaring that "to make a country powerful, railways are essential," but the reactionaries at Court succeeded the progressives in their influence upon the Emperor, and a subsequent edict declared that "they must only be built with Chinese money." That is, they must be postponed indefinitely, for the Imperial Government in China is always poverty-stricken, and the wealthy Chinese would not dream of putting their money into a Chinese official scheme. But at this time foreigners were so confident that the era of railway construction in China had at last dawned, and that the consequent opening up of the vast Celestial Empire was about to begin in earnest,

that long descriptions of the route of the first "Great Western Railway of China" were published; the Emperor called for reports from the leading provincial Viceroys; and the talk was of nothing but railways. The Imperial family, and Liu Ming-chuan, and a few others were strongly in favour of the introduction of railways, and against this powerful combination the conservative officials could not prevail directly. So they cunningly adopted the round-about method of declaring that not only must the railways be built with Chinese money, but that the ore must be mined and smelted, and the rails made, in China, since otherwise foreigners would acquire an influence so great as to be dangerous to the stability of the Throne, and would profit by enormous sums which ought to be spent in China. The result was that nothing whatever was done, and the subject has not been heard of for five years. The original proposals were to build one line from Liu-ko-chiao, near Peking, to either Hankow, the great port on the Yangtze, in Hupeh, or to Chinkiang, near the junction of the Grand Canal and the Yangtze, in Kiangsu. Another short line was to connect Tungchow, the village at which one leaves the Peiho River for Peking, with Tientsin, and thereby place the capital in communication with the coast; while a third, which would certainly prove an extremely prosperous undertaking and which British capitalists have long been eager to build, would connect Canton with British Kowloon, and thus bring the commercial metropolis of China into close relations with the great port of Hongkong. An American mining expert who had charge for a time of the largest silver mines in China, gave me this interesting explanation of the failure of the Chinese to take any steps with regard to railways. They desire, he said, to do the biggest thing at once. They reason thus: Great Britain, with 38,000,000 population, has 20,000 miles of railway; therefore China, with 350,000,000, ought to have x miles. They will not buy rails abroad: they insist upon making them; and they will not make iron rails, which they could easily do, and which would serve just as well for their light

traffic. They must have steel ones. But steel rails cannot be made cheaply except on a very large scale, say the smelting of 250 tons of ore a day, and without long experience; and with the Chinese habits such an output is utterly impossible, no matter what the mines may be. They have already discovered excellent iron mines, but as the phosphorus limit is exceeded, steel cannot be made there, and they will not make iron. Moreover, they sent two Englishmen and two Germans to seek for steel-making iron and coal throughout the provinces of Southern China. This, again, was wrong—English and German methods of work are entirely different, and the task should have been assigned exclusively to one or the other.

One railway only have the Chinese—or, rather, has Li Hung-chang—pushed towards completion. It was first laid from Tientsin to the coal mines at Kaiping—80 miles. It is now completed as far as Shan-hai-kwan, where the Great Wall reaches the coast, a total distance of 180 miles, which a fast train is supposed to cover in eight hours. It was next to be extended to the Taling River, an addition of 128 miles—and 40 miles of earthworks at one end and 38 at the other have been practically completed—whence one branch would run south through Kinchow to Port Arthur, and another north to Mukden and ultimately to the very important strategic city of Kirin. The war has, of course, put a complete stop to this for the present, but before the war broke out the birthday of the Empress-Dowager came in sight, and the railway subsidy of 2,000,000 taels was promptly diverted to swell the funds for celebrating the occasion. Foreigners have pointed out to the Chinese authorities again and again, that without this railway they could hold neither Port Arthur nor the sacred and rich province of Manchuria, but no attention was paid to the warnings, and now the inevitable result has come. Except as the result of foreign pressure, China is as little likely to build railways—except possibly for purely strategic and defensive purposes—as she is to introduce any other feature of reform or progress.

Finally, the time has come when the interests of British trade must be more closely regarded. We have done up to the present three-quarters of the foreign trade of China, but the returns show a distinct falling off, and with the establishment of manufactures in China, and above all, in the face of Japanese competition, this will certainly tend to become more marked every year. In spite of the admirable Chinese Customs service foreign trade is hampered in many ways, and successful efforts are made to keep it from extending into the interior. The *likin*, or inland tax, stations are merely opportunities for "squeezing" on the part of the mandarins, in spite of some recent reforms in this direction, and the vast interior of China is almost as closed to us to-day as it was before the first treaty port was opened. China may not prove the bonanza to foreign manufacturers that is sometimes supposed. The population presses so hard on the means of subsistence, and there are so many parts always on the verge of famine, that the purchasing power of the inhabitants may fall short of all expectations based only upon their numbers. But at any rate the time has now come for us to insist upon a radical reform of the government, and a consequent lifting from the shoulders of the people the load of corruption and extortion they bear. One of the first effects, too, of greater foreign influence would be the revival of the tea and silk trades, which would mean at once enormously increased exports, and ability to purchase foreign imports. This, again, would furnish a natural and most welcome palliation, even though only a temporary one, of the silver question, because of the demand for silver that would arise among the 350,000,000 inhabitants of the Chinese Empire. As an example of the silver-absorbing power of China, it is only necessary to consider the statistics given by the British Consul at Canton, according to which from May, 1890, to December, 1891, no fewer than 23,000,000 silver coins were made at the Canton mint, and put into circulation, their value ranging from a dollar to five cents.

There is one factor in Chinese life which prevents the outlook

from being utterly hopeless, and curiously enough this factor is one of the most ancient of original Chinese institutions. I mean the system of competitive examination for office. If this system could be detached from its Confucian ineptitudes, and filled with a living content of western knowledge, the future of China might be vitally changed. It is important, therefore, to understand what this system is. Chinese historians declare that the Emperor Shun examined his officials competitively in the year 2200 B.C., and that the Emperor Chow, in 1115 B.C., instituted examinations into the "six arts" of music, archery, horsemanship, writing, arithmetic, and social rites. This is no doubt mythical, but to-day the entire Chinese Empire is covered with a network of machinery for examining ambitious men in the "six arts," and the "five studies," and conferring the "three degrees." The latter are, first, *hsui-tsai*, or "Budding Genius"—a sort of B.A.; second, *chü-jên*, or "Promoted Scholar"—or M.A.; third, *tsün-sz*, or "Ready for Office"—which may be compared with LL.D. The first of these examinations is held every year in each provincial district, of which there may be sixty or seventy in a province. The subject of examination consists of an essay and poem upon assigned topics, and the examination lasts a night and a day. Out of about 2,000, twenty "budding geniuses" are selected; they wear a gilt button; they are no longer liable to corporal punishment; and they become marked men of the literary class. The second examination takes place triennially at every provincial capital. On the last occasion Wuchang had 15,000 competitors and Nankin 18,000. Of these, less than 1 per cent. can be successful. The examiners in this case come from Peking; the examination is divided into three sessions of three days each; and again the subjects consist almost solely of commentaries upon some passage of ancient literature. The examination is conducted with extraordinary ceremony and the utmost stringency. The Examination Hall is like that which I have described in Peking; everybody—examiners, magistrates,

A Chinese School: Victims of Confucius.

police, competitors, doctors, cooks, tailors, and executioner, for any offence within the sacred enclosure is punished by death—is shut up irrevocably during the nine days that the examination lasts. The strain is, of course, intense, and competitors frequently die from the close confinement and extremely insanitary surroundings. As a specimen of the subjects of examinations, the following passage from the Analects of Confucius was one of the themes in the last competition at Nankin:—"Confucius said, 'How majestic was the manner in which Shun and Yu held possession of the empire, as if it were nothing to them.' Confucius said, 'Great indeed was Yaou as a sovereign! How majestic was he! It is only Heaven that is grand and only Yaou corresponded to it! How vast was his virtue! The people could find no name for it!'" The competitors, that is, were simply invited to write an essay in the most extravagant style of eulogy upon the wisdom of the sage as exhibited in this passage. Three weeks after the examination, the names of the hundred successful are published, and the happy ones are more than repaid for what has often been a lifetime of study, by the honours that await them. No actual reward of any kind is conferred upon the "Promoted Scholar," but his position has been compared with that of a victor in the Olympian Games, and his fortunate family shares in his fame. He mounts a larger gilt button upon his hat, places a tablet over his door, erects a couple of flagstaffs before his house, and plunges into study again for the third and final examination of the following spring. "Though ordinarily not very devout, he now shows himself peculiarly solicitous to secure the favour of the gods. He burns incense and gives alms. If he sees a fish floundering on the hooks, he pays its price and restores it to its native element. He picks struggling ants out of the rivulet made by a recent shower, distributes moral tracts, or better still, rescues chance bits of printed paper from being trodden in the mire of the streets." The final struggle takes place in Peking, and is, of course, more difficult and even stricter than the preceding,

for success in it means public office — the offices being distributed among the successful by lot. Beyond this triumph, however, there is still a possible pinnacle of literary glory, namely, to be selected by the Emperor himself as the best of all the successful competitors in Peking, and to receive the title of *Chang-yüan*—say, "Poet Laureate"—the finest flower of the literary culture of the Celestial Empire. To have produced such a man is the highest honour to which any province can aspire; the town of his birth is immortalised, and his happy parents are regarded as the greatest benefactors of the State.

As at present organised, this system of competitive examination has its excellent side. The Rev. Dr. Martin, who has written a luminous analysis of the system,* gives three great merits. First, the system serves the State as a safety-valve, providing a career for ambitious spirits who might otherwise foment disturbances. Second, it operates as a counterpoise to the power of an absolute monarch, since without it the great offices would be filled by hereditary nobles, and the minor ones by Imperial favourites. Every schoolboy is taught to repeat a line which declares that "the General and the Prime Minister are not born in office." It constitutes, in fact, the democratic element in the Chinese Constitution. Third, it gives the Government a hold on the educated gentry, and binds these to the support of existing institutions. "In districts where the people have distinguished themselves by zeal in the Imperial cause, the only recompense they crave is a slight addition to the numbers on the competitive prize list." On the other hand, the evils of the system are sufficiently obvious. Its sole effect, so far as education and the government of China are concerned, is to limit knowledge to the moral and intellectual level of the far past. As an example of the pitilessly mechanical character of the Chinese culture which this system promotes, the following

* "Hanlin Papers," by W. A. P. Martin, D.D., LL.D., Peking, 1880, p. 51.

sketch of the rise and fall of a Chinese literate is illuminating:—

"The provincial records have not been revised for many years, and thus are not available to determine what success Kwangsi has had in the examinations at Peking; but there are those who say that not for a century had a Kwangsi man taken first, second, third, or fourth place until 1889. In that year Chang Chien-hsün secured the highest honours. He was born in 1856 of a very poor family, of Hunan origin, living in Lin-kuei-hsien, Kuei-lin-fu. He became a *hsiu-tsai* at the age of 15, a *chü-jên* at 23, and *chuang-yüan* 10 years later. The story goes that in all the examinations before taking the *chü-jên* degree he was easily first, and his talents attracted the attention of Yang Chung-ya, appointed Governor of Kwangsi in 1876, who promised him his grand-daughter in marriage. We may suppose that from that time his poverty was not allowed to interfere with the prosecution of his studies. After Mr. Chang's success at Peking, he became, as is usual, a compiler in the Hanlin College. Unfortunately, the career which opened so well has received a sudden check. The report reached Kwangsi this summer that the *chuang-yüan* of 1889, in the course of tests upon the result of which depended appointment to the provincial literary offices, wrote another character of the same sound in the place of one he intended, as if, for example (the illustration is intended for readers unfamiliar with China), in writing of the position of the subject in the State, he had spoken of his *rites* and duties. The reader acquainted with Chinese feeling will understand how much worse than any moral delinquency was this error."*

The competitive system is the door beyond which lies the way to the civilisation of China. Upon that door is written the word Confucius; and unless this is erased and the word Truth substituted, China must remain the victim of more enlightened races, even until she be finally dismembered and disappear. If, however, any pressure could be found strong enough to provide for modern teaching in her provincial centres, and for the westernisation of her topics of competitive examination, with offices as rewards for those who distinguish themselves in the different branches of modern science, China might emerge from her slough of Confucian ignorance, prejudice, cruelty, and corruption. As Dr. Martin says, "If the examiners were scientific men, and if scientific subjects were made sufficiently prominent in these higher examinations, millions of aspiring students would soon become as earnest in the pursuit of modern science

* Chinese Imp. Maritime Customs, Decennial Reports, 1882–1891, Mr. C. C. Clarke's Report on Lungchow, p. 656.

as they now are in the study of their ancient classics." Nothing could have so great an effect in moulding the future of China as the modernisation of her best-preserved and most ancient institution.

War has once more given us our opportunity. Japan has pricked the bubble of the "awakening" of China, and has exhibited the Chinese Government as the imposture it really is. Without in the least exercising our power to dictate to Japan the terms she may make so far as regards herself—which we have not the faintest right to do—we must not fail to control the results of the peace so far as other nations are concerned. First of all, we must insist upon the opening of treaty ports wherever these may be required for foreign trade. It would, perhaps, be inadvisable to insist upon the opening of the whole of China at present, until the people of the remoter districts have had time to learn that we are only peaceful traders, and not barbarians, though if this should be possible, no scruples regarding extra-territoriality should be allowed to stand in the way for a moment. Second, we must insist upon foreign representatives being received by the Emperor himself at regular intervals, and under such circumstances as to make it clear that the honours of the audiences are divided; and the Ministers of the State must realise once for all that diplomacy and procrastination are not synonymous terms. Third, for the protection of our future interests in the Far East, we must secure by purchase, exchange, or otherwise, a naval base a thousand miles north of Hongkong. This is an absolute necessity, and there will not again be such an opportunity for acquiring it. Chusan at once suggests itself, if we do not want the responsibility of taking Formosa, which has no harbour. Chusan has been occupied by us before; it has an excellent harbour, which can be easily fortified and made impregnable; and it is at the mouth of the great trade route of China. But this is a point that our naval authorities must decide. Fourth, the literal fulfilment of our previous convention with China regarding Indian trade with Thibet must

now be demanded. The Chinese will say that they cannot guarantee that the Thibetans will not oppose us by force. This is quite true—it is wholly out of the power of the Emperor of China to give any such guarantee. Our answer must be that in that case we will look after ourselves. The present moment is the turning-point in our relations with China, and it must not be allowed to pass. China, we must never forget, yields only to pressure. She has never been opened except by war, and will never admit reform except at the point of the bayonet or at the sight of the ironclad.

It may be said that I am calmly assigning the predominant role in the present situation to Great Britain, to the exclusion of other Powers. To this I unhesitatingly reply that the predominant role belongs to us, and that it is not our policy to exclude anybody, for, unlike other nations, whatever we get is thrown open to the whole world. Beside the commercial interests of England in China, those of all other nations are almost insignificant. This is an assertion which can be proved in a moment. Take the question of foreigners in China first. On December 31, 1891, a census was taken in all the treaty ports of China, including the two Customs stations of Lappa and Kowloon, by the Chinese Customs service. These were the results :—

	British.	American.	French.	German.	Portuguese.	Spanish.	Italian.
Residents ...	3,746	1,209	681	667	659	316	133
Firms ...	345	27	24	82	7	5	4

That is, in the Treaty Ports alone, there were 3,746 Britishers and 345 British firms, against 3,811 subjects and 161 firms of all the other European Powers and the United States put together. But to this must be added the British population and firms in Hongkong and Singapore trading with China, by far our most important representatives in the Far East. When this addition is made, it is clearly not too much to say that the interests of other nations are insignificant in comparison.

Second, take the question of trade. The figures furnish the following astonishing results:—

FOREIGN TRADE OF CHINA WITH EACH COUNTRY, 1893.

		Haikwan Taels.
Continent of Europe, except Russia	21,070,988	
United States	17,169,213	
Russia	10,267,743	48,507,944
Great Britain and British Possessions		195,710,240

That is—taking the Haikwan tael roughly at four shillings (it averaged 3s. 11¼d. in 1893)—the total trade of Great Britain and British possessions for 1893 amounted to £39,000,000, against £9,700,000 for the whole continent of Europe (except Turkey) and the United States. These are the figures given by the Customs, but a considerable reduction must be made from British trade in view of the fact that a good deal of the trade passing through Hongkong and Singapore is not British. It is impossible to calculate how much this is, but to show the overwhelming superiority of British trade, let us suppose that Hongkong and Singapore, our greatest trading centres with China, were wiped off the map, with all their trade. Even in that case British trade would still stand at 62,288,436 taels, or £12,400,000 against £9,700,000 for all our civilised competitors put together! If under these circumstances we do not recognise that we are the predominant Power in all foreign relations with China, and act accordingly, then we are indeed unworthy of the heritage of good fortune that sturdier Englishmen have made and bequeathed to us.

In all the foregoing I have written upon the supposition that at the conclusion of the present war we may still have a united China to deal with. This, however, may well not be the case. The Abbé Huc, Cooke, and Gordon, all thought that the Chinese Empire would possibly one day collapse, and indeed the ties which hold it together are much weaker than is realised by most people. The victory of the Japanese, if carried beyond a certain

point, would quite surely bring about the downfall of the present dynasty, seated as it is upon an insecure throne. If China, however, is torn asunder or falls to pieces, then a much vaster problem will face us. For in that case we shall find ourselves face to face with the momentous suggestion of Asia for the Asiatics. Upon this I shall have something to say in a later chapter.

KOREA.

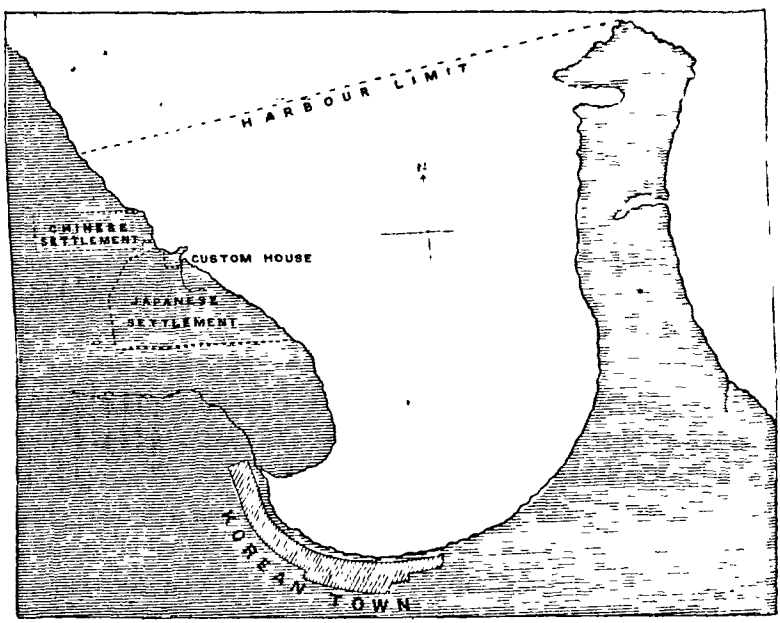
CHAPTER XXI.

ON HORSEBACK ACROSS KOREA.

I TOOK an unusual way to reach the capital of the Hermit Kingdom. The ordinary route is to go by steamer from Nagasaki or Chefoo to Chemulpo, and then walk or be carried in a chair twenty-six miles to Seoul. The steamer which took me from Nagasaki to Vladivostok touched at Wön-san on her way north, so I made arrangements, by the kind help of the Commissioner of Customs, for ponies and men to be ready for me on my return, to make the journey across the peninsula to Seoul, instead of going round by the beaten track. There is a road from the coast to the capital, and a number of Japanese and an occasional Consular officer had travelled it; but at the time of my journey very few other Europeans had crossed the country. The road is of interest at this moment because it was for a long way the route of the third column of the Japanese army to the battle of Phyöng-yang, and Wön-san itself was worth seeing for the sake of its possible future. The Korean authorities discourage travellers, and the Korean Minister at Tokyo persistently declined to give me a passport or to apply to Seoul for one for me, although pressed by the British *chargé* to do so. And the condition of the country may be judged from the fact that four months before my journey marines were landed from the American, Russian, and Japanese men-of-war at Chemulpo, and marched all night up to the capital to protect the foreigners there; while H.M.S. *Leander* got up steam in a hurry and left

Yokohama at a few hours' notice for the same purpose. Some Chinese, it was stated, had entrapped Korean children and sent them to Tientsin for immoral purposes, and the Koreans professed to believe that the missionaries had stolen them to use their eyes for medicine and for taking photographs. Hence murders of Koreans and a threatened attack upon foreigners.

The town and harbour of Wön-san—which is known as Gensan to the Japanese, and Yuensan to the Chinese—are of great



THE SETTLEMENTS AND HARBOUR OF WÖN-SAN.

interest because of the part they are likely to play in the future of the Far East. Broughton Bay, named after Captain William Robert Broughton, the companion of Vancouver, who discovered it in 1797, afterwards losing his ship, the *Providence*, near Formosa, is situated in the middle of the east coast of Korea. The northern arm has been named Port Lazareff by the Russians, whose ships come regularly for manœuvres. It was here that their cruiser, the *Vitiaz*, ran on

a rock in broad daylight and calm weather, on May 10, 1893, and became a total wreck. This bay is the only useful harbour on the whole six hundred miles of coast; but to make up for the deficiency, it is one of the finest harbours in the world. Its area is not far short of forty square miles; it is perfectly sheltered; it is open all the year round; there is excellent anchorage in from six to twelve fathoms; and several streams empty into it, from which excellent water may be obtained. The provinces of which it is the sea outlet are the most mountainous in Korea, and they undoubtedly contain the two most precious of minerals—gold and coal. The former, to the value of half a million dollars annually, has been passed through the Custom House, and probably an equal amount has been smuggled; while deep seams of coal have been observed in several places, and anthracite from the district is burned by foreigners at Wŏn-san. For game of all kinds the surrounding provinces are a sportsman's paradise. Tigers and sables abound, and wild-fowl of all sorts exist in myriads. And the sea, says the Commissioner of Customs, "literally teems with legions of fish," which the Koreans are too lazy to catch. "The whales, black-fish, sharks, and seals, which abound on the coast, are left to fatten on the multitudes of salmon, cod, *tai*, haddock, whiting, ribbon-fish, herrings, sardines, and innumerable other tribes that crowd the waters at various seasons." With all these natural advantages, Wŏn-san, in the hands of energetic and intelligent people, would soon become a place of great commercial prosperity and strategic importance.

The port of Wŏn-san was thrown open to the Japanese in June, 1880, and to the trade of all nations in November, 1883. The settlements there, as shown in the accompanying sketch-map, are the native town, dirty, crowded together, and traversed by filthy alleys in the place of streets; the Japanese settlement, neat and clean and prosperous; and the Chinese quarter, something between the two. The total population is about 15,000. Steam communication is kept up with Vladivostok and Naga-

saki by the excellent Japanese line, the *Nippon Yusen Kaisha*; a Russian steamer, which calls at regular intervals; and one small but very profitable coasting steamer flying the Korean flag. The total tonnage of the port for 1893 was 69,835; the total import and export trade, 1,481,260 dollars; the export of gold, 632,960 dollars, besides 140,000 dollars' worth remitted as taxes on Government account to Seoul; and the net total collection of revenue, 53,089 dollars, say £6,500. A telegraph-line now connects Wön-san with the capital. I give all these details because of my belief, the reasons for which will be found in other chapters, that Wön-san—or, at any rate, some point in Broughton Bay—will ultimately be the Pacific terminus of the Trans-Siberian Railway.

As soon as the *Takachiho* reached Wön-san, I said good-bye to my very pleasant quarters, and went on shore, where through the glass I could see the ponies already waiting. A Korean pony is a small, shaggy, scraggy creature; but you never like him less than when you first set eyes on him; and before I had gone far with these I learned that many virtues were concealed in their little brown bodies. Four ponies and six men were at the landing, the latter being three grooms, two soldiers, and an interpreter. One pony was for me to ride; upon the second were strapped my bag, canvas hold-all, containing rug and sleeping arrangement, camera, and gun; the third was burdened with two boxes of provisions, for it is necessary to carry with you almost everything you need to eat; while the fourth pony had all he could do to transport the money for current expenses—about twenty Mexican dollars, £2 10s. The only Korean currency consists of miserably-made copper, iron, and bronze coins, called "cash" in English, and *sapek* or *sek* in Korean, about the size and weight of an English penny, with a square hole in the middle by which they are strung on plaited straw in lots of five hundred, subdivided by knots into hundreds. Hence the expression "a string of cash." The pony carried about fifteen thousand of them.

My Start Across Korea

The *personnel* of my little caravan was decidedly curious, but not very impressive. The grooms, called *mapou*, were good-natured, grinning creatures, low down in the social scale, dressed in extremely dirty white cotton robes and trousers, with straw sandals, and battered old bamboo hats, or none. The soldiers, called *kisiou*, were tall, well-built fellows, distinguished from civilians by a broad-brimmed hat of heavy black felt, with a scarlet tuft trailing behind, and a coat of rough blue cotton, shaped exactly like the exaggerated dress-coat, reaching to the heels, that one sees in a burlesque on the Gaiety stage. They carried no weapons but a long staff, and they appeared amused when I asked where, since they were soldiers, were their guns? My interpreter was a tall, really handsome man, with a striking resemblance to the Speaker of the House of Commons, dressed in spotless white, topped by a monumental black pot-hat made of woven horsehair, and with nothing undignified about him but his name, which was I Cha Sam. It was impossible to get a Korean who knew any English, even a little "pidgin," so I had to be content with one who spoke Japanese. From his preternatural silence and solemnity I soon discovered that his knowledge of Japanese was on a par with my own. The bill of expenses furnished me by Mr. Creagh was as follows:—

4 Horses, at 5,000 cash	20,000
1 Interpreter (falsely so-called)	4,000
2 Soldiers, at 100 cash a day, 11 days there and back	2,200
3 "Kumshaws" (tips) to soldiers and interpreter, at $1 ..	2,000

Total, 28,200 cash, say forty-three Mexican dollars, *plus* travelling expenses and food. The price of the horses included grooms. The cash, by the way—miserable, battered, verdigris-covered coins, apparently compounded of an alloy of tin and dirt—have actually been debased by the Korean Government for illicit profit, while they bear on them such gracious inscriptions as "Used for Public Benefit," and "Enrich the People."

The journey overland from the east coast to the capital generally occupies five days, at the rate of something over thirty

miles a day. Thirty-five miles from Wön-san, however, north of the overland road, is the great Korean monastery of An-byön, which I was assured was the only interesting place in all Korea. So I determined to lose a day and visit this. I said good-bye to Mr. Creagh about midday, and pushed on fast through the filthy lanes and among the squalling pigs of the native town of Wön-san.

The red shades of evening appeared while we were still jogging along at our best speed. When it was quite dark we reached a little Korean inn, where the grooms had already aroused everybody. Out of a house of apparently two rooms, twenty white-robed travellers turned out and squatted in a row, like tired ghosts, to stare at us. The men were all for stopping—the road ahead was very steep, the woods through which it passed were infested with tigers, the ponies were tired, the monastery would be closed for the night, &c., &c. But I looked at those two rooms and those twenty travellers, and hardened my heart. Then the soldiers, seeing that I was determined, rose to the occasion. One of them shouted to the innkeeper to turn out and bring torches to light us, and his manner, I remarked with interest, was peremptory. The innkeeper demurred in a high tone of voice, when, without another word, this excellent *kisiou* took one step toward him, and whack! with a tremendous slap in the face sent him staggering across the road. The suddenness of the blow took me aback, but nobody seemed in the least surprised or annoyed, and the innkeeper appeared a minute later with a blazing pine-knot and led the way. We left the road at right angles, and fifty yards from the inn we plunged into the woods and began a steep ascent along a narrow stone path. Then a curious thing happened. As soon as our last pony was out of sight, a simultaneous and blood-curdling howl arose from the twenty travellers behind us, and was prolonged with a series of *yah! yah! yah!* till the hills echoed again, and when it ceased our six men similarly exploded, each one putting his back into the yell, till it rivalled the notes

of a Chicago mocking-bird. The travellers howled again, and our men answered, and so on till we could no longer hear the former. "What on earth is the matter?" I asked I Cha Sam. "To keep the tigers away!" he replied. I strapped my revolver outside my thick riding-coat, but if the noise was half as disagreeable to a prowling tiger as it was to me, no wonder he avoided our company, for anything so ingeniously ear-splitting as the sounds our men kept up at intervals of three or four minutes for an hour and a half I never heard.

Meanwhile the road ascended rapidly and the stony path grew narrower, till at last we were climbing a mountain-side. At one moment we were in thick woods, at another a precipice of considerable depth yawned a yard or two to our left, then we were struggling up a stone-heap on to a plateau where half a dozen miserable houses formed a village. No European horse could have made a hundred yards of the road, yet the ponies stepped doggedly over everything, rarely stumbling, and catching themselves again instantly if they fell. I soon learned that the less attempt I made to guide them the safer it was. Before leaving Wŏn-san Mr. Creagh had said, "If you don't need the soldiers as an escort, you'll find them very useful in other respects." And I soon learned how. The theory of Korean government is that the people exist for the officials. And as I had this escort I was travelling as an official, and therefore entitled to demand any services from the people to speed me on my way. The night was pitch dark, and without torches we could not have gone a yard. Therefore the soldiers levied lights from the people. As soon as they spied a hovel ahead they shouted a couple of words, the man carrying the torch helping lustily. I found later the words were simply *Poul k'ira* ("Bring out fire!"), and no matter how late the hour, how bad the weather, how far to the next house—no matter even though the sole inhabitant was an old woman or a child, the torch of pine-wood or dried millet-stalks bound together must be produced instantly, the guide must hold it flaming in his hand when we reach his door, and woe betide

the unlucky being that keeps Korean officialdom waiting, if it be only for half a minute. Sometimes the stage to the next house was two or three miles, sometimes it was only a couple of hundred yards, but there were no exemptions to this fire-conscription. The general effect as I saw it from the rear was extremely picturesque and striking—the line of ponies with their sideways-swaying loads, the ghostly-white figures of the men on foot, the cries to each other and the animals, the recurring shout for fire, the yell to keep off the tigers, the dense wood, the precipice, the flaming and flashing torch waved ahead or beaten on the ground, dividing everything into blood-red lights and jet-black shadows, and finally the thought that it really was just possible the gleaming eyes of one of the great striped cats might be choosing their victim a few feet away.

Our goal announced itself long beforehand by gate after gate, and the instinctive feeling that we had got to the top, whatever it was. Then the edge of the ravine became paved with stone slabs, and a hundred yards along it brought us to a pair of great wooden doors. They were opened after a little parley, and we found ourselves in a small courtyard, and surrounded by a score of young priests, apparently delighted to see us. The rugs were hastily unpacked, and a brazier was brought. I boiled the kettle, plucked and cooked one of the birds I had shot, and then, while the monks sat round in a laughing, chattering circle, I supped magnificently off broiled duck, hard-tack, and marmalade, washed down by many basins of tea. (Nobody but a traveller knows the real value of tea.) At midnight I was shown to a clean, paper-windowed room about six feet square, and turned in on the floor. And when the morning came it showed how strange and romantic a place I had reached—one of the most striking and picturesque of the unknown corners of the world.

The great monastery in the mountains is one of those chosen and built by a militant Korean sect to serve, according to need, either as a retreat for the spirit or a refuge for the body. The

monks themselves do not look very warlike, but the situation of the monastery is an almost impregnable one. It can be reached by only one road, a long steep stony path, in which "a thousand might well be stopped by three"; behind it on two sides are mountains of rock, and on the fourth it is secluded by a very deep and precipitous ravine through which dashes a noisy torrent. The central buildings, on the edge of the ravine, shown in my photograph, are the sacred apartments of the king, entered by only one attendant, and they are kept in perfect preservation and hourly readiness for his coming. When I woke in the morning I found myself in the midst of great heavy-eaved temples through the open doors of which could be seen the solemn faces of squatting gilded gods, while already half a dozen priests were bending before the altars with incense and drum.

All the buildings of An-byön are in the style to which the traveller so soon gets used in the East—rectangular wooden structures with high-peaked roofs and richly-carved curving eaves, generally with three doors at one side and the chief idol facing the largest central entrance. Before him are sets of altar utensils and little brass tallow lamps, and joss-sticks which the pious visitor purchases for a few cash and lights at his prayers. The walls are covered with silk and brocade, mostly very old and time-stained; the ceiling is marvellously carved and gilded, perhaps a huge dragon appearing at one end and worming himself in and out of the masses of ornament to the other; and innumerable gongs and drums invite the hand of the too willing pilgrim. The interior of these temples is tawdry, but the massiveness of the wooden architecture, its bright colours, its picturesquely contrived vistas of gate and gable and column and pavilion, taken together with the wonderful natural situation of the place, form an impressive and romantic spectacle. The most curious sight in the monastery, however, is four huge idols of brilliantly painted wood, carved with a good deal of appreciation of the heroic human face and form, which stare at

one another across a narrow passage from behind the bars of two great cages, a pair of war-gods being on one side, and a king and queen (the latter playing a colossal mandolin) on the other. My Japanese vocabulary unfortunately did not permit me to make through my interpreter any inquiries as to their abstract theologic significance. The headgear of the monks beggars description, and I held my sides again and again as a new specimen emerged from the dormitories. Hats of paper, of wood, of bamboo, of horsehair, and of wire; hats round, square, triangular, cylindrical, conical, and spherical; hats like a clothes-basket, like a sieve, like a pumpkin, like a flying crow, like a paper boat, like three three-cornered gridirons fastened together at the edges; half of them affording not the slightest pretence of protection against cold or rain or sun, but being either symbols of sacerdotal rank, or else simply the offspring of a disordered creative imagination. Every priest, too, carried or wore a rosary of red wooden beads, polished like crystal by ceaseless fingering. I told my interpreter to ask one of them by and by privately whether a string of these could be purchased as a souvenir. He, however, blurted out the question to the chief Abbot in the presence of fifty priests, and the hospitable old gentleman instantly took off his own rosary-bracelet of specially big beads and handed it to me, saying, "They cannot be purchased, this is a present." Naturally before leaving I wished to make him some present in return, but ransacking my bag produced nothing whatever suitable. My revolver or knife I could not spare, the old gentleman had already refused to taste whisky, and there appeared to be literally nothing to give him. I recollected, however, that I had had some new silk pocket-handkerchiefs made and embroidered in Japan, and one of these presented with many airs and the explanation from the interpreter that the monogram on the corner was "good joss," satisfied him completely. For our entertainment I left a few dollars in the treasury, the amount, attested by my autograph, being solemnly and elaborately

THE ROYAL APARTMENTS, MONASTERY OF AN-BYÖN.

entered in the great ledger of the monastery, and when at noon I mounted my pony, a hundred of the white-robed, much-hatted priests, led by the venerable Abbot himself, came a little way down the hill to give me good-bye.

It would be absurd to deny that I experienced a new sensation—a "traveller's thrill"—at this moment. I had never at this time been out of reach of white men before, and now I was at the beginning of a week's ride across a country which a very few years ago was an utterly unknown and "hermit" land, alone with six men of whom I knew nothing whatever, and with whom I could have communication only through a very difficult language which my "interpreter" knew little better than I did, and with not a white face between me and the Yellow Sea. The new sensation comes, I fancy, from the first consciousness of the fact that all the protective and co-operative machinery of civilisation has temporarily disappeared—that whatever happens one has nothing to count upon but one's own health, one's own wits, and if the worst comes, upon one's own hand. My reflections of this kind, however, were soon interrupted for a consultation. There were two roads, I Cha Sam came up to say, the longer and better one to the left, the much shorter but mountainous one to the right. Which would I take? At this moment my chief desire was to get the trip over as soon as possible, so I promptly chose the latter, and an hour later we were in the first pass.

For three hours we climbed steadily up the narrow pass, and then through it. The road was merely a bridle-path or the dry bed of a mountain stream strewn with stones of all sizes. But the ponies never slipped or even hesitated, and our little train wound along in single file without a moment's rest till dusk. The *mapous* sang and jödelled, hundreds of magpies flew chattering about us all the time, big mangy old crows hopped alongside, and the rare passers either stopped and stared till I was out of sight, or else looked on the other side and passed pretending not to have seen me. From eleven

o'clock till half-past three it was blazing hot, and my helmet with its two inches of solid pith was none too thick. Then it began rapidly to grow chilly, and long before dusk I had a frieze riding-coat buttoned up to my chin. How these Korean *mapous* and *kisious*—grooms and soldiers—manage to escape pleurisy and consumption I cannot imagine. Positively their only garments are a short loose jacket without any fastening down the front, and a short loose pair of trousers, both of thin white cotton cloth. As the man walked at my pony's head in the evening he shivered till I could hear his teeth chatter, yet less than two hours before he was wet through with perspiration. By six o'clock we had descended somewhat to an extensive plateau, and in the distance we could hear the dogs of a village. As we entered it they ranged themselves in a snapping, yelping band at our heels, and from every low doorway an inhabitant crawled out to look at us. Any one who likes to be conspicuous should go to Korea, for the look of overwhelming, speechless surprise that passed over each face as I came in sight was wonderfully flattering. As a rule, however, the face withdrew immediately, and the door was hastily and silently closed—I suppose lest my official attendants should demand the hospitality which every Korean householder is bound to give.

In the middle of the village—the twenty or thirty miserable thatched dwellings hardly deserve the name—we came to a halt, and I Cha Sam approached. "What is it?" I asked him, and he replied with a single Japanese word, "We will sleep." I looked at the house before us and my heart sank. True, I knew that Korea did not boast a Palace Hotel, but this was rather too much. A big, tumble-down, badly-thatched hovel surrounding a yard; all round this, stalls for ponies and bullocks; in the middle a huge cesspool surmounted by a dunghill, in which horrible black sows were rooting; opposite to the entrance the two rooms in which the dozen members of the family lived and had their domestic being, and a large guest-chamber on one side for my men, and on the other,

exactly fronting the most fragrant corner of the dunghill, a smaller one for myself. I Cha Sam flung open the door—about two feet by three—and bowed me in. The floor was of hammered earth; the walls were mud, covered in spots with very dirty paper; the material of the ceiling was concealed by the dirt and smoke of generations, and tapestried with spiders' webs. At first, of course, I was highly indignant with Sam for bringing me to such a hole, but from the look of genuine surprise on his handsome placid countenance I soon gathered that this was the regular Korean hotel, and that I had nothing else to expect. Therefore I accepted the inevitable with what joy I could, and with difficulty crowded myself, my bag, rug, and provision-box into the room.

My Korean trip taught me at least two things. First, that our supposed instinctive dislike to being personally dirty is merely a matter of local convention. At home I am as unhappy as another if I cannot get my tub at a moment's notice morning or evening, yet after twenty-four hours of Korea I regarded washing, except just a swish of face and hands, as an artificial virtue, and when I found that there was no clean place anywhere on which to lay my coat if I took it off, I just kept it on. In fact I kept it on for five days. And whether it was the new sensation or the old Adam, I do not know, but by and by I grew rather proud of being distinctly and indisputably dirty. The dunghill, of course, did not come to recommend itself to me as a bedroom balcony, but that, unhappily, was only a speck compared with later experiences which I will not describe. The second thing is that repugnance to certain animals is a foolish weakness which sensible people should immediately abandon. When I left Wŏn-san I loathed cockroaches. To-day I care no more for a cockroach than for a rabbit. Every room I occupied in Korea was full of them —literally full, hundreds and thousands and tens of thousands. The first night was horrible with them, and sleep was theoretical only; but after that I used to pick them out of my hair and

beard, or flick them off my coat like flies. They came to my candle till the floor shone all over from their pretty polished backs, and if I put a sheet of paper on the ground twenty of them would start surveying it before I could begin to sharpen a pencil. My third night in Korea was the only other one wasted. My quarters were even worse, and besides the cockroaches there was an army of rats. They ran over my feet the moment my candle was out, they ran over my body, they crunched at my sugar, they scampered over my bag, till at last I gave in, lighted the candle again, and read all night. As my only book was *The Newcomes* it was a night well spent. Every Korean *choumak* or inn was as I have described, sometimes a little better, once or twice very much worse. In this respect I should probably have fared better if I had chosen the longer and more travelled road.

The people of the country varied very much. Two villages out of three were very friendly, highly inquisitive, and easily moved to laughter. The third was generally sullen, and its inhabitants would not come near me, would not reply to the greeting of the country—"*Oual keuiounni eutesio?*" ("How is your health today?")—and would not even return a friendly nod. More than half the time I walked, and my chief amusement was to get a mile or two ahead of my caravan and enter a village by myself, walk into the middle of it, and seat myself calmly on somebody's doorstep as if I were perfectly at home. The stupefaction of the natives was delicious. Probably they had never seen a white man before, for very few had ever crossed Korea, and these generally by the longer and better route. First they would stare from a long distance, then they would drive off the dogs, then some patriarch would approach cautiously and hazard a question. I would reply with a few lines from "Hamlet" or "Paradise Lost," whereupon they would all laugh. Then one would remove his long pipe from his mouth and offer it to me, and though the courtesy was neither accepted nor returned, it sufficed to break the ice. Invariably they would begin by feeling

my clothes, and the different textures of these filled them—knowing nothing but the calico which is their sole wear—with infinite amazement. Especially the corduroy of my riding-breeches pleased them, and they would send to the other end of the village for an old man to come and feel it. Then if they were amiable I would give them a little entertainment, consisting of opening my watch-case by blowing on it, turning out my pockets for their inspection, doing a few tricks with coins, making cat's cradles with string, striking matches, and other such infantile performances, firing my revolver as a grand finale. Childish and ignorant in the extreme they were, knowing less of the outside world than a Digger Indian. Poor, too, beyond telling. I believe that ten dollars would have bought everything (except the crops) that I saw exposed for sale in hundreds of shops from the time I left Wŏn-san till I struck Seoul. The men were well-built, as a rule, and fairly well-featured; but I did not see a single woman or girl during my trip who could have been called even moderately good-looking. The daily labour in the fields or at the millet-mill is too hard for that, and the women are even more beasts of burden than the men. One or two men I saw most horribly diseased with some kind of scabby elephantiasis, and one of these bothered me not a little by coming and poking his head over my shoulder while I was taking photographs. Only twice was there the least sign of hostility. Once in the middle of the night some sneak-thieves came to my room, but I happened to be lying awake smoking in the dark, and heard them coming. So when with great stealth they had got the door half-open, I struck a match, when they shut it with a bang and scuttled like rats. On the other occasion I started out to investigate a big village in the dark, and finally got surrounded by a rather unpleasant and unfriendly crowd, who were gradually edging me along the street in the direction I did not want to go. But luckily I Cha Sam had discovered my absence and set out to look for me, and his commanding tongue soon put matters straight. During the

first two days I was greatly annoyed by my *mapous*, whom I could not get along at all. At the midday halt they would lie about for a couple of hours, and in the morning it was two or three hours after I was up before I could get them to start. On the third morning I lost my temper, and going into their room I kicked them one after the other into the yard. This was evidently what they expected, for they set to work immediately. Unless they were kicked they could not believe the hurry was real. Afterwards, by a similar procedure, I started whenever I wished. At first, in the evenings I tried to learn something by inviting the innkeeper and an old inhabitant or two, with the interpreter, into my room, and regaling them with weak whisky and water and dry biscuits. But they expressed their appreciation in the native manner by such horrible eructations, and would "spit refreshingly around," as Pendennis says, to such an extent that I was compelled to decline to receive callers. My official *kisious* were of little use, and as lazy as lobsters. My camera was injured by being jolted on pony-back, so I told one of these that I would give him a dollar—a fortnight's wages—if he would bring it safe to Seoul for me. He jumped at the offer, carried it for about a mile, then stopped at a house and shouted the magic words "*Cha'm chim neira!*" ("Carry a parcel a stage!"). The householder hastened to obey, for, as I have explained, any official (as I was because of my escort) has a right to demand any such service of the people. This process was repeated every few miles, and so my camera was borne by hand across the Hermit Kingdom from sea to sea, with the tall soldier convoying it in the rear.

As regards the country itself it was far more fertile in appearance, and also much more cultivated, than I had been led to expect. After leaving the monastery we climbed till evening, then slept in a flat valley, then climbed again through a succession of narrow, rocky, and difficult passes till we reached an extensive plateau or table-land, 2,500 feet above the sea, stretching between two fine mountain-ranges, and perhaps forty

A Korean Hotel.

Men and Women of Korea.

miles in length. The mountains were splendid in their autumn tints, the air was superb, the weather perfect, and I had not a lonely moment. In fact, I seldom passed pleasanter days than four of those spent riding or walking in utter solitude in Central Korea. The nights were all bad, and at that time I used to wonder what real travellers think about during the lonely hour between dinner and sleep, when instead of being a hundred miles from a white face they are a thousand, when instead of a day or two dividing them from civilisation they must be alone for months and years, and when the revolver under their hand day and night is there from necessity and not from nerves. I am inclined to think we do not quite appreciate them as we ought. For my own part, I used to reflect how good it would be to sit again in the midst of the old faces in the club, or to drop into a stall at the Lyceum, or to listen once more to "Qu'allez vous faire si loin de nous?" But I wander. To hark back, therefore, the chief crops grown in the interior of Korea are rice, millet, beans, and red peppers, the second of these much predominating and furnishing the staple food for the people. So far as appearances tell anything to an inexpert eye, Korea ought to be rich in minerals, and there is certainly plenty of land which would give fair if not great returns for cultivating. The village industries were few and far between—a little spinning and a little primitive weaving of cotton cloth. The country is miserably poor at present, for nobody cultivates much more than will support him, as the only outlet for the surplus, and that an unavoidable one, is into the pocket of the nearest official.

My last day's journey of sixteen hours brought me to the great gate of Seoul at eight o'clock. This was my first glimpse of the East of my imagination—the rocky ascent, the towering battlemented walls, the huge black gates inexorably closed. Neither persuasion nor money could open them, as the keys of the colossal padlocks were with the King's guard at the palace. So rather than return five miles to a *choumak*, I rolled myself

up under my rug, and slept there on a big stone all night; and when morning broke, and the countrymen coming to market lifted the corner of the rug and saw what was underneath, they were not a little astonished. Then at daylight we rode into the city, and Mr. Colin Ford, Her Majesty's most hospitable Consul, met me at his gate in gorgeous pyjamas, and extended the bath and the breakfast and the welcome of civilisation to a particularly dirty traveller.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CITY OF SEOUL AND ITS INHABITANTS.

IT is the City of Ichabod. A few years ago—a few, that is, in the life of a city—Korea was educating the Japanese people in the arts: Satsuma ware was born in Seoul. To-day there is not a piece of porcelain to be bought in the city worth carrying away. A few years ago it took an army of 130,000 men under the greatest general Japan has ever had, to conquer the country. Yesterday the advent of thirty American marines threw 250,000 Koreans into a panic. To-day two alien nations are fighting for Korea on her own soil, and she is unable to lift a finger to help or oppose either of them. I visited one of the old palaces. Pushing the door open to enter, I almost pushed it off its hinges; the spacious entrance-terrace is a mulberry orchard; grass grows in the stables; the throne on which the King sat to receive his ministers is black with mildew; the splendid carvings are rotting from the lofty roofs; not a soul sets foot in these deserted halls. Oddest of all, as I stood in silence by the great pillars of the throne-room, a dove cooed from her nest in one of the carven capitals. It was the vision of Omar Khayyam:—

> "The palace that to heaven its columns threw,
> And kings the forehead on its threshold drew,
> I saw the solitary ring-dove there,
> And 'Coo, coo, coo,' she cried, and 'Coo, coo, coo.'"

The word Seoul (pronounced variously *Sool*, *Sowl*, and *Say-ool*, and erroneously marked on many maps as Kinkitau, the name

of the province) merely means "Capital," the proper name of the city being Han-yang, "the fortress on the Han." It is a city of about 250,000 people. It is surrounded by a more or less dilapidated wall, pierced by several imposing gateways, all of which are closed at sunset at the sound of a great bell, and the keys placed for the night in charge of the King's guard at the palace. On one side of the city a second wall encloses the palace and the royal domain, and from the farthest point of this a stony mountain rises abruptly and symmetrically to a sharp peak. The city is surrounded by mountains, and lies like the palm of one's hand when the fingers are turned upwards; but this one, Nam-san, is the highest, and every night about eight o'clock a beacon blazes for a few minutes from its summit. On some hill-top of the west coast, if order reigns, a signal-fire is lighted after sunset every day. Another hill-top further north repeats it if all is quiet there too, and so from mountain to mountain the bonfires travel round the Hermit Land—along the shore of the Yellow Sea, across the frontier of Manchuria, by Russian Tartary, down the Sea of Japan, coasting the Korean Strait, up the Yellow Sea again, and inland to the capital, till at last the sudden blaze upon Nam-san, almost in the royal gardens, tells his anxious Majesty that one more day throughout his kingdom has passed in peace. The telegraph, however, is fast putting an end to this picturesque custom.

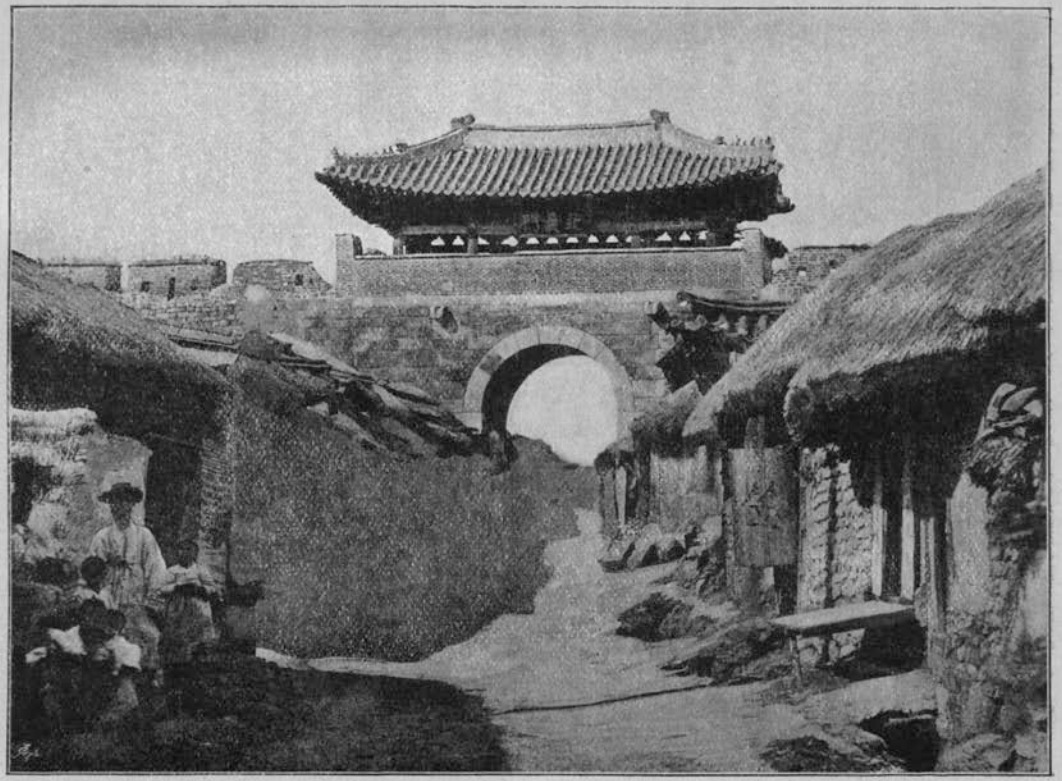
Seoul is twenty-six miles by road from the port of Chemulpo, but fifty-five by the winding river Han. The latter could undoubtedly be rendered serviceable for regular water-traffic to and from the capital, which it approaches within about three miles, at a place called Mapu, but at present it is navigated only by native junks, to whose owners time is of no importance, and an occasional steam-launch which is often aground during half the time of its trips. Chemulpo—known to the Japanese as Jinsan, and to us officially as Jenchuan—is a flourishing place, with a good many excellent modern buildings

and an energetic commercial population, among whom the Japanese are pre-eminent both in numbers and in enterprise. In 1882, when the port was opened to foreign trade, Chemulpo was a handful of mud huts. Now its four settlements—foreign, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean—are well built, well lighted, and have good roads. And they are so crowded that land is rising to a high price. Its population, formerly a few fishermen, has risen to about 7,000, of whom Europeans and Americans number about 30, Japanese 2,500, Chinese 670, and Koreans 4,000. The general foreign settlement is under the control of a Municipal Council, composed of the Consuls, a Korean official, and three representatives of the landholders. The outer harbour affords abundant and safe anchorage, but the inner harbour is small and silting up, and as the tides rise and fall about thirty feet there is a vast mud flat at low water. Chemulpo is connected with the capital by telegraph, and there is a daily courier service, under the control of the Customs Service. The latter is a branch of the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs, and is conducted in an ideal manner. In 1893 a Chinese "Mutual Transport Company" was formed, for the improvement and communication with the capital and the development of trade on the Han. The trade of Chemulpo for 1893 was not up to the average, owing to droughts and political disturbances, but its figures, considering what Chemulpo was fourteen years ago, are a striking proof of the possibilities of Korea with energetic merchants and honest administration. The exports are gold, rice, beans, and hides. The first-named was exported to the amount of 201,846 dollars. The total exports reached 866,495 dollars, as against an average of nearly a million and a half for the three preceding years; and the total imports 2,421,133 dollars. The balance against Korea is supposed to be made up by the export of smuggled gold. The shipping entered and cleared at the port during 1893 was 490,981 tons, of which 159,626 tons was Japanese, 50,434 Korean, and 28,809 Chinese. The British flag did not put in an appearance, but it is estimated

by the Customs that 54 per cent. of the foreign import trade is British in origin, 24 per cent. Japanese, 13 per cent. Chinese, and 9 per cent. German, American, French, and Russian put together. As I have said, the development of Chemulpo is an interesting and important index to the potential development of Korea generally under a reformed administration.

Seoul has two wide streets, and two only. For a quarter of a mile in front of the palace and then at a right angle for a mile or so, there is a fine well-kept road fifty yards wide, while everywhere else in the city the average width is probably about twelve feet. Almost all are traversed by an unsavoury gutter, sometimes down the middle, sometimes at the sides, while every now and then you cross a kind of canal-sewer, a lingering shallow stream of water, refuse, and filth. Needless to add, therefore, that the atmosphere of Seoul is very offensive to the nostrils. The houses are built of wood and paper, and all thatched, for it is forbidden for anybody except an official to cover himself with a tiled roof. The shops are segregated in streets according to their wares. Thus, the grain-market is in the wide street, and for half a mile this is covered with broad shallow baskets full of rice, millet, beans, and many other seeds, among which the merchants and their customers walk and talk. The cabinet-makers occupy a whole street, the secondhand dealers another, the dealers in piece-goods have a row of warehouses, the gold- and silver-smiths live along the canal, and so on. But there is nothing whatever for a stranger to buy. I went to a score of cabinet-makers' shops to purchase one of the curious little cabinets, but the most expensive one I could find cost only two dollars, and that was not worth carrying home. Nothing of gold or silver is made except to order; the embroidery is shoddy; the paintings are ghastly; the carving is beneath contempt. The glory has departed.

A street full of Koreans suggests the orthodox notion of the resurrection. Everybody is in white robes, and even though a man has only one suit in the world, it is clean. When he goes



A Gate of Seoul.

home at night, if he belongs to this poor class, he retires to bed and his wife washes and pommels his clothes. I say "pommels," for ironing is an unknown art in Korea. After being washed the calico is stretched on a wooden block, and then with a flat block of wood in each hand the woman pounds it for hours. After sunset all Seoul rings with the dactylic tap-tap-tap, tap-tap-tap of these domestic voices of the night, as with the incessant cry of a million strident insects. The dress of the women is extraordinary, and certainly, to adapt Dr. Johnson, they must have been at infinite pains to invent it, for by nature no one could be such a fool. The upper garment consists of sleeves and an apology for the body of a jacket about six inches deep and reaching therefore about three inches below the armpits. The skirt is a great baggy petticoat attached to a broad waistband which begins about six inches below where the jacket ends. Between the two there is nothing—nothing, that is to say, except six inches of dirty brown skin, just those parts of the body being exposed which all other women in the world prefer to conceal. The effect is disgusting. Moreover, as if to emphasise this ludicrous exhibition, these very women are most particular to hide their faces from any man. The theory is that a male Korean always looks the other way, but the moment a foreigner comes in sight they hastily draw over their faces the folds of the light cloak worn hanging from the head. It is a pity they have not fairy godmothers to supply them all with invisible caps. Seoul would be the more attractive. The Korean men, on the other hand, are fine fellows, tall, well-built, graceful, dignified, generally possessing regular features. They all have, too, a well-fed look, although the standard of physical living is about as low as is possible. Poverty reigns in Seoul—extreme, universal, and hopeless. And the explanation is to be found in one elegant word—*nyangpan*, of whom more hereafter. The *nyangpan* is the official, from the Prime Minister to the lowest hanger-on of the palace. All Korean society consists of two classes, those who are *nyangpans* and those who are not.

All work is done by the latter, and the problem of the former is how to get most of the product of it with least trouble. By taxes, by enforced bribes, threats, by "squeezes," in short by every known or discoverable form of extortion, the *nyangpan* makes the other support him. Consequently the other takes good care not to earn a cash more than will keep the life in his own body and enable him just to hold the *nyangpan* at arm's length. Hence, by an obvious chain of causation, the utter rottenness and inertness and stagnation of Korean society. Any proposed change for the better has against it the whole *nyangpan* tribe, that is, everybody in Korea above the hewers of wood and drawers of water. And the people themselves have fallen below the stage at which they could initiate the sole step that would save them—"swift revolution, changing depth with height." Is there, then, any hope for Korea? Only from outside—that is, under present circumstances, from Japan.

In considering the present and the prospects of Korea, one is confronted with the striking discrepancy between the excellent possibilities of the people themselves, and the almost unimaginable sloth and degradation in which they are content to exist. All observers lay emphasis upon the natural capacities of the inhabitants. "The Koreans are undoubtedly a fine race. The men are stalwart and straight, proud and independent; they possess intelligent and expressive faces, small feet and hands, and are even-tempered, except when excited by drink—not an uncommon condition."* Yet under the native *régime* their character is as degenerate as that of a Bushman. They are totally devoid of ambition or even the elements of personal or commercial success. "The average Korean takes life as easily as he possibly can. Does he till the soil, a mere tickling of the surface at seed-time, an occasional weeding at remote intervals, and a happy-go-lucky mode of garnering, constitute all the assistance he feels called upon to render a bountiful nature; he lets an ample water supply run to waste,

* Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs, Mr. Hunt's Report for Fusan, 1891.

regardless of periodical droughts; and he recks but little of ditching or drainage, but allows the heavy summer rains to gather foot-high on the standing crops. Is he a trader, he places his business in the hands of a professional middleman, who, in turn, passes it on to his satellites; days, or weeks, perhaps, are wasted, with sublime unconcern, in bickering for a trumpery object or a trivial advantage, while his profits are absorbed in the social entertainment he receives and in exorbitant brokerage. Is he a fisherman, he is generally heedless of the magnificent hauls that could be made by venturing upon the sea, and remains content with such fish as will run into crudely and easily constructed traps set out along the shore, which only require attention for an hour or so each day. Does he labour for daily wage, and extra pay is given in busy times, a sense of burdensome wealth will speedily overcome him, and make him decline remunerative work, except at his own fanciful terms, until the 'bonanza' of extra earnings is exhausted and the pinch of necessity drives him; then, however, it must be admitted, he falls to again cheerfully enough." *

In further elucidation of this point I may add an explanation of the foregoing from the same dispassionate source, which will carry more weight than could attach to my own much briefer and more restricted observation of the same facts. "The buildings and walls of the different cities in the province present a poverty-stricken aspect, and the Yamêns in all the towns are in a state of extreme dilapidation. The poverty does not reach the stage of actual distress, but has rather the appearance of a curtailment or suppression of every want beyond the bare necessity of keeping body and soul together. The rapacity and cruelty of the officials are not conducive to the accumulation of wealth. All stimulus or inducement to increase his possessions and give himself comforts is denied the middle-class Korean; for he is not allowed to enjoy the results of his labour and industry,

* Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs, Mr. Oiesen's Report for Yuensan, 1891.

never feeling sure that the little property he may have (or even his life) is safe from official despotism, and consequently the people have become dispirited and indifferent. Safety and security are found in obscurity only." * Hence the saying, "Given a good meal and a hot floor, and a Korean holds Paradise cheap." This is Korea after centuries of vassalage to China. As for the cruelty and barbarism with which the law—or the absence of it—is enforced, the vassal has even surpassed the sovereign. Secret official assassination is the accepted way of settling a political difficulty or removing a troublesome Minister. When the body of the murdered Kim-Ok-kyun (whose story will be found in the following chapter) was brought back to Seoul, this was the treatment meted out to it: "The corpse was laid flat on the ground face downwards, the head and the four limbs being supported on blocks of wood to facilitate the process of cutting them off. The head was first severed from the trunk by the tedious process of sawing. The right hand was then cut off at the wrist, while the left arm was severed midway between the wrist and the elbow. The feet were chopped off at the ankles. Last of all, the back of the trunk was hacked at regular intervals with three lateral cuts, seven inches long and one inch deep. The head was suspended from a tripod made of old bamboo sticks tied together with rough straw ropes, and the hands and feet, joined in a bundle, were hung by the side of the head, the trunk with the three lateral cuts being left on the ground just as it had been placed for mutilation. The process was carried out in a barley-field by the riverside at Yokkaichi. Originally it was understood that the mutilated corpse would be exposed for a space of about a fortnight, but the disgusting business came to an end sooner. The trunk was then thrown into the river, while the head was salted and sent to Chiku-san in Keiki-do, to be subsequently exposed throughout the length and breadth of the peninsula, and finally brought back to Chiku-san

* Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs, Mr. Hunt's Report for Fusan, 1891.

and there cast away to become the prey of vultures. As to the hands and feet, it is stated that one hand and foot of either side were salted and sent to Kankyo and Keisho-do." Kim's widow and daughter, who had been living in poverty as washerwomen, were brought to Seoul at the same time, and with his father, an old blind man, were beheaded. The following royal decree placarded on the walls of Seoul also throws light on the condition of the country and the character of the throne: "Considering that the choice of candidates for the harem of the Korean Prince Royal will take place on 19th inst., the Government interdicts throughout the kingdom up to that date marriages between Koreans."

As a further concrete illustration of the social condition of Korea, take an event which occurred a week before my visit. There is a guild or secret society of the *colporteurs* of Korea, having wealthy merchants in the capital for its apex, and the army of itinerant peddlers traversing the country in all directions for its base. It was discovered or suspected at the palace that a conspiracy threatening the throne was hatching among the members of this guild. Therefore one afternoon six of the most prominent members, rich merchants, were seized, thrown into prison—the barracks either contain or constitute the prison—and the same evening, when the general in command found leisure or energy to attend to the matter, the unlucky six were quietly strangled. There is "no infernal nonsense" about trial or conviction or sentence in the "Land of the Morning Calm." So much for law. Politics is on the same level. I had three letters of introduction to Korean statesmen. One was dead, the second was in banishment at Hongkong, the third sent me his card with a polite message that he had just been appointed Prime Minister, and *therefore* could no longer talk about politics! And another little illuminating fact is that when a Korean statesman is banished or executed for political trespasses, his wife and daughters and all his womankind are taken and attached as a sort of permanent

staff of prostitutes to one of the departments of State for the use of the Minister and his assistants.

The country has been believed by every traveller to possess great mineral resources, besides its undoubted gold-mines, but every attempt to develop these has come to utter failure, through native corruption and indifference. Mint, post-office, match-factory, sericulture, mining—all of these have been introduced with a flourish of trumpets, to collapse miserably within a short time. If it had not been for the Japanese, Korea would still be the Hermit Kingdom, without a trace of trade or the possibility of improvement. One thing only has saved it from being annexed by anybody who chose—the fact that it stands at the focus of the geography of the Far Eastern question, too important to Great Britain, Russia, Japan, and China for one of these to encroach upon it without arousing the opposition of the other three. Most Korean affairs are conducted with a pomposity and a grandiloquence only equalled by their insignificance. Since the country was opened to foreign intercourse, for example, a Foreign Office, among other administrative institutions, has been created. It consists of a President, two Vice-Presidents, a Councillor, and twenty-two clerks. For futility it can only be compared with the scenes and personages of a Gilbert and Sullivan opera, yet it enforces respect by the appalling name of *T'ong-ni-kio-syep-t'ong-sang-sa-mu-a-mun*. The Korean navy consists of half a dozen "Admirals," who know no more about a ship than a Hindu knows about skates—indeed, how should they, since there is no Korean ship for them to know? And the Korean army is almost equally non-existent. There are a few thousand soldiers, under the professed supervision of two American instructors, called respectively Vice-President and Councillor of the Board of War, but no account need be taken of them. Two regiments were drilled for my inspection, and a very amusing sight it was—a sort of cross between Swedish gymnastics and the soldiers of Drury Lane pantomime. An eye-

THE OLD PALACE AND NAM-SAN, SEOUL.

THE CONSUL GOING TO AN AUDIENCE, SEOUL.

witness has just written that a number of newly-raised "naval soldiers" were armed with muskets without locks! As has been seen, Korea has played no part whatever in the struggle that is being waged on her own soil, with her own future for the stake. Lower than this no people could sink.

Before I left Seoul I had the honour of an audience with his Majesty the King, the British Consul-General presenting me. We were received at the palace at three o'clock by half a dozen Vice-presidents of the Foreign Office, in a small detached wooden building where we sat for a quarter of an hour drinking champagne over a green baize table, seated on ordinary foreign chairs, and with gimcrack brass electric-light fittings over our heads. Then an officer came for us, and in solemn single file we proceeded through the grounds and yards to the central open pavilion where alone the King holds audience, first the official court interpreter, Mr. Kim, a Korean nobleman, as no one of lower rank is admitted to the presence of the sovereign, then the Consul, then myself, and more officials in broad-winged hats and gorgeous purple robes bringing up the rear. As soon as we came in sight of the King an official left his Majesty's side and instructed us in a loud voice in the method of our approach—left turn, ten steps, right turn, ten steps, bow, up two steps, bow, up two more steps, right turn, five steps, and bow—all of which brought us face to face with the King across a small square table. Mr. Kim assumed a crouching position from the first moment, like a sportsman stalking a covey from behind a hedge, and never quitted it till we were out of the royal sight again. The first thing that caught my eye was a three-and-sixpenny English hearthrug of glaring red and green, which formed the cover of his Majesty's reception table. The second thing was that our noble interpreter was so overcome by finding himself in the presence that his English took wings and he could scarcely articulate. The King is a little man, dressed in handsome dark red silk, richly embroidered with gold, and wearing a pot-hat of similar material. His hands he kept hidden in his

voluminous sleeves. His face is pale but very pleasing, brimming over with good nature, and each of his questions he chattered out with a rippling nervous laugh like a girl's. And every time he laughed we could see a large yellow bead of something he was chewing. On each side of him stood a big solemn-faced minister suggesting from time to time a word or a proper inquiry. Poor Mr. Kim, however, was a broken reed. The King asked something with a merry laugh. After a short pause a faint and shuddering gurgle emerged from beneath Mr. Kim's low bent head. "What does he say?" asked the Consul of me (I was standing between them) behind his hand. "I give it up," I returned. "I thank his Majesty," said the Consul, taking the bull by the horns, "for the honour of this audience." The King laughed again, as if it were an excellent joke, and asked something else. This time I nudged Mr. Kim and listened intently. Slowly in an awe-stricken tone the words came, "His Majesty hopes your King is quite well." The Consul looked at me beseechingly, and I whispered, "Hopes your King's quite well," trying to keep a straight face. "I thank his Majesty," replied the Consul boldly, thinking he was now on safe ground, and not having caught my words: "I am quite well." This time when his Majesty laughed, we both laughed with him. And so on, over the usual routine questions for a quarter of an hour, when the King graciously expressed his good wishes for my journey and we retired, carrying away the impression of a capital little fellow, rather in awe of his own big ministers. Afterwards, with similar formalities, I was presented to the Crown Prince, a flabby-faced youth of about nineteen, bloated with dissipation, turning helplessly to two horrible eunuchs who stood beside him for what he should say to us, bobbing up and down in his pitiable physical nervousness—altogether a dreadful spectacle, suggestive of the society of Gomorrah.

The foreign community at Seoul consists of about a score people, excluding Japanese, of whom there is a long street of merchants and artisans. A good many missionaries still stay

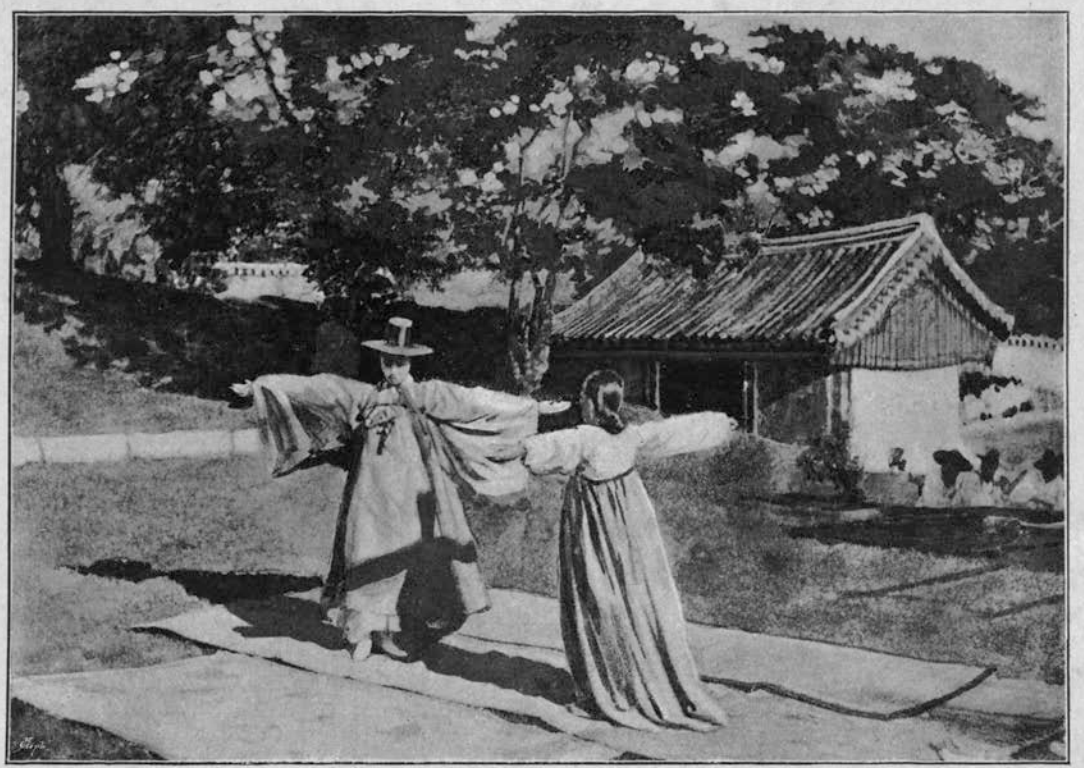
in Seoul, although, I believe, they are still forbidden to preach; and one only, an excellent doctor, is permitted to practise, in charge of a free hospital and any number of daily out-patients. The little community manages with difficulty to amuse itself, and from time to time a threatened attack forms a welcome break in the monotony of its life. For example, a few weeks before my visit, there was a passing scare. All the Chinese servants left, simply saying that the foreigners were to be killed, and they dare not stay; arms were brought out and cleaned and loaded; the Russian Legation was prepared for a siege, and everybody was ready to rendezvous there at a signal of three rifle-shots, and a rocket, if at night. Thirty American marines, however, marched up one night; a number of Russians followed, and although upwards of twenty Koreans were butchered in the streets by their compatriots, no foreigner was disturbed. But the beacon did not blaze from Nam-san that night.

It would be easy to fill pages with descriptions of the queer scenes and circumstances of Korean life. I will mention only a few, as specimens. A remarkable figure frequently met in the street is the mourner. He is dressed in rough material—almost sackcloth; on his head is a hat of colossal dimensions—perhaps four feet in diameter, within which his head almost disappears; what is left of his face is hidden by a fan made of a piece of sacking stretched between two sticks, over the top of which he peeps to find his way. Another interesting fact is that the ox-slaughterer is the lowest man in the social scale—an obvious relic of Buddhism — while next above him come the pork-butcher and the prostitute.* Korea, which is modelled in most respects upon China, has a theoretical system of competitive examination for office. In fact, however, the system is as corrupt as everything else Korean. A picturesque and curious ceremony is this. A successful candidate is introduced by his friends to one of the examiners, who, amid much laughter, buffets him about, tears his clothes, breaks his hat, daubs his

* Ross.

face with ink, and sprinkles powdered white soap over his moist countenance. He is then led away home, washed and dressed in holiday attire, and receives congratulations for the rest of the day.

As I happen to be much interested in the art of dancing I took occasion to see and photograph the votaries of Terpsichore in every country of the Far East. And for charm of sentiment I must give the palm to Korea, over China, Siam, Malaya, and even over Japan. The *danseuses* of the last-named country are, of course, far more attractive objects, but I was unable, perhaps from ignorance of the entire significance of the elaborate Japanese dances, to discover in the rhythmic movements of the *geisha* or the elaborate evolutions of the *No*-dance, a simplicity of sentiment and a suggestion of romance—the latter the rarest thing in the Far East—equal to those of the Korean dancing-girl. I engaged a troop of them to dance one afternoon in the grounds of the British Consulate, which the Consul was good enough to lend me for the occasion. They arrived in chairs, with a band, and the considerable retinue which invariably appears in a mysterious manner at every eastern function. Each dancer produced her pipe and tobacco-pouch, and the performance was preceded by a long and animated conversation. Then mats were spread upon the grass, the band sat down in a long row, and under the trees, amidst the quaint many-eaved architecture, to a discordant and yet curiously effective accompaniment, was displayed before us the Korean version of the universal poem of "Love's Young Dream." One of the *danseuses* assumed the *toga virilis* and the pot-hat, the other remaining the embodiment of womankind. The former was of course the suitor, the pursuer, the love-beseecher; the latter was the besought, the elusive, the hesitating, the *Ewigweibliche*. A more prosaic metaphor would be that of the candle and the moth. To a hand-thundering of the drums the lover advanced, displaying himself like a purple pigeon in the sun. The drums faded to a mournful piping of the flutes, and the loved one retreated in



KOREAN DANCING-GIRLS : "LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM" (*Instantaneous Photograph*

shyness and refusal. With a less confident quick-step the former advanced and renewed his persuasive suit. The latter repelled him, but less cruelly. The music grew tenderer and more insinuating, and the hopeful one returned to his charming. The shyness grew less, the warmth grew greater, the *lento* changed to *adagio*, and the *adagio* to *presto*, the confidence of the one increased with the increasing hesitancy of the other, the pursuer revolved in a large but decreasing circle, the pursued fluttered in her little round, the space diminished, the thrill became more intense, the doomed pair were within a few feet of each other, till on a sudden space was annihilated for them and time at an end, and to a final triumphant outburst of wood and brass they were merged in each other's arms in an ecstasy of passion, and the spectators relieved their pent-up feelings in an explosive sigh. The victor was vanquished at the moment of his conquest; the captured triumphant in the moment of her defeat—an exquisite personification of the sex which—

> "draws
> Men upward as a moon of spring,
> High wheeling, vast and bosom-full,
> Half clad in clouds and white as wool,
> Draws all the strong seas following."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE QUESTION OF KOREA.

THE Chino-Japanese war is the last link in a perfectly straight chain of circumstances. Korea remained sealed against foreigners of all nations until 1876. In 1866 an American trading schooner called the *General Sherman* had been destroyed by the Koreans, and her crew and passengers murdered. A man-of-war, the *Wachusett*, was sent to obtain satisfaction, but failed to do so. In 1870 a small American expedition again appeared, and while negociations were in progress the Koreans fired upon a surveying party. Thereupon the American commander landed his troops upon the island of Kiang Hwa, destroyed five Korean forts, routed the army, killing three hundred men, and then retired, with the result that Korea was more firmly closed against foreigners than ever. The young King came of age in 1873, and succeeded his cruel and conservative father. In 1875 some sailors from a Japanese man-of-war were fired upon while drawing water at Kiang Hwa. The Japanese captain also destroyed a fort and killed a number of Koreans, but his Government followed up the incident by sending a fleet under General Kuroda to demand satisfaction, and offer the Koreans the alternative of a treaty of commerce or a war. The former was chosen, China, on being appealed to by the Koreans, refusing—as she has done on several similar occasions—to have anything to do with the action of her nominal vassal. A treaty was therefore signed on February 26, 1876, between Korea and

Japan, and from this moment dates the opening of Korea to foreign intercourse. On this occasion, too, the suzerainty of China was formally set aside, without any protests on her part —indeed, with her express recognition, since she refused to interfere. Article I. of this treaty reads as follows: "Chosen being an independent State enjoys the same Sovereign rights as Japan." Chemulpo, Fusan, and Wŏn-san were opened by this treaty to Japanese trade.

The King himself was in favour of extending the same privileges to other nations at their request, but the conservative party prevented him. In 1882 fresh overtures were made by foreign nations, and the reactionaries took alarm. Led by a "scholar" named Pe Lo-kuan, an insurrection broke out in Seoul, directed chiefly against the Japanese, as the promoters of foreign intercourse. Several members of the Japanese Legation were murdered in the streets, the Legation itself was attacked, and Consul Hanabusa and his staff were at last compelled to cut their way through the mob and make for the palace, where they hoped to find refuge. Here, however, the gates were shut against them, so they fought their way out of the city with the greatest pluck, and walked all night to Chemulpo, where, to escape violence, they put to sea in a native boat. Fortunately the British surveying vessel, the *Flying Fish*, saw them, and conveyed them to Nagasaki. This happened in July, 1882. Of course the Japanese Government took instant action, but with great moderation began by merely sending Mr. Hanabusa back to Seoul with a strong escort to demand reparation. This was abjectly offered, and a Chinese force which arrived with unusual promptitude suppressed the rebellion, executed a number of the leaders, and caused their mangled bodies to be publicly exposed. A sum of 500,000 dols. was accepted by the Japanese as indemnity, but was subsequently forgiven to Korea in consequence of her inability to pay it. Next year, other nations once more following in the steps of Japan, treaties with Korea were concluded by the United States, France, England, and Germany.

In 1885 the whole incident was repeated, with this difference, that the instigators of the outbreak were a few students who had imbibed progressive notions in Japan, and who imagined that if they began by vigorous assassination foreign nations would support them. During a dinner-party to celebrate the opening of the new post-office, an attempt was made to murder Ming Yong-ik, an influential nobleman, who, though he had visited the United States, was most bitterly opposed to the party of progress, and was known to have expostulated with the King for having conferred office on the students who had been educated in Japan. The revolutionary leaders proceeded to the palace, secured the person and to some extent the sympathy of the King, and in his name, and no doubt with his assent, despatched messengers, and finally an autograph letter from himself, to Mr. Takezoye, the Japanese Minister, begging him to come instantly and safeguard the royal person. Mr. Takezoye, accompanied by the Legation guard of 130 Japanese soldiers, complied, and guarded the palace for two days. In the meantime, the revolutionists executed five of the conservative Ministers. By this time the Chinese troops in Seoul had decided to assert themselves: two thousand proceeded to the palace, and without allowing any opportunity for negociation or explanation, fired upon the Japanese guard. Although outnumbered by almost ten to one, the latter had no difficulty in holding their own, but at length the King decided, to prevent further bloodshed, to place himself in the hands of the Chinese, and therefore he proceeded alone, with the consent of Mr. Takezoye, to the Chinese commander. Having no further reason for remaining, the Japanese left the palace, fought their way to the Legation, but finding it surrounded by an armed mob of Chinese and Koreans, and without any provisions for a siege, they quitted it again, and it was immediately burned behind them. Then for the second time the Japanese representative and a small band of his countrymen fought their way through the streets of Seoul, and walked twenty-six miles to Chemulpo, where they chartered a steamer

and returned to Japan. Again the Japanese Government demanded satisfaction, but this time from China, on account of the action of the Chinese soldiers. The negociations between Count Ito and Li Hung-chang, at Tientsin, in 1885, followed, and after long delays, and finally a distinct hint from the former that if a result satisfactory to Japan was not arrived at, war would be declared, the Convention of Tientsin was concluded at the eleventh hour. China agreed to withdraw her troops from Korea, to punish her officers who had commanded the troops in Seoul on the occasion of the attack upon the Japanese there on December 6th of the preceding year, and to investigate the outrages committed by her troops on the following day. The clauses of the Convention, which has unfortunately never been published officially, were two. The first declared that the King of Korea should be invited to form a force sufficient to preserve order in future, to be trained by officers of some nation other than China or Japan, and that certain internal reforms should be instituted by him; and the second, that either China or Japan should have the right to dispatch troops to Korea, if necessary to preserve order and protect their nationals, on giving notice each to the other, and that when order was restored both forces should be withdrawn simultaneously. Thus China at last formally recognised the equality of Japan with herself so far as Korea was concerned. This Convention shows one other important thing—that Japan put forward only the most moderate claims, that she sought no advantages for herself in Korea, but accepted in full satisfaction of her demands conditions which merely guaranteed the future peace and prosperity of Korea. These facts should have been borne in mind when charges of intemperance were made against Japan for declaring war.

For the third time history has sought to repeat itself. Another rebellion broke out, which the King of Korea was wholly unable to suppress. This time Japan did not wait for the burning of her Legation and the expulsion of her representative by the forces of Korean reaction. But let it be remembered that while

landing troops in perfect accordance with her treaty rights, she again contented herself with proposing to China the joint occupation of the country until reforms should have been definitely carried out to render future disturbances impossible. Not one sign has she ever given of the slightest intention to secure territorial advantages for herself in Korea. On the contrary she has taken every occasion to declare specifically that she was determined upon the independence of Korea. Upon China must rest the responsibility of refusing these terms. Her attitude toward Korea has been marked by all her characteristic unscrupulousness. When her suzerainty over Korea has brought prestige, she has asserted it; when it has involved responsibility, she has repudiated it. She has at last fallen between the two stools. So far as my knowledge of the situation goes, I am unable to see how Japan could have acted with greater moderation, or could have been satisfied to propose any other conditions.

In the anti-Japanese feeling prevalent in England at the outbreak of the war, Japan was currently charged with having deliberately provoked hostilities for the gratification of her own ends. This charge is baseless in the form in which it was commonly made. It is true enough that Japan had long contemplated the possibility and even probability of war with China about Korea, and she had made the most careful preparations for this. But to fear and foresee a series of events is quite different from provoking them. Otherwise half the nations of Europe might be charged with provoking the hostility of their neighbours at this moment. Japan, understanding China so incomparably better than any European nation understands that strange country, knew well enough that Korean troubles would occur and recur until drastic measures were taken for their permanent suppression, and that China would always oppose these measures, even by force if diplomacy and procrastination should fail. At last the old trouble came, in a ising of the *Togaku-to*, as it is called in Japanese, or the

Tonghak rebellion—the two characters of this name signifying "Eastern Learning." This was nothing more than one of the periodical revolts against official exactions, but it grew rather faster than usual, and the rotten Korean government was beaten in several engagements. China thereupon despatched a considerable force to crush the Tonghaks, and in the despatch announcing the fact to Japan she employed an expression which deliberately set the Li-Ito Convention at defiance. Japan had already been intensely irritated by an incident which had just occurred, and this significant neglect of a diplomatic requirement added fresh fuel to the flames of her anger.

Japanese public opinion at the time cannot be understood without a knowledge of this incident. I will therefore narrate it in the fewest possible words. The leader of the Korean revolutionists who had attacked Ming Yong-ik, that arch-conservative and denouncer of the young Koreans who had been educated in Japan, was a certain Kim Ok-kyun. When the revolt was crushed and the hopes of the young Korean Japanophiles at an end, Kim Ok-kyun naturally sought refuge in Japan. There he lived in security and obscurity for some time, but the Korean Government had neither forgotten nor forgiven him. Two or three Koreans were accordingly despatched secretly to Japan to assassinate him—in itself a sufficient outrage to Japanese soil. They nearly succeeded, but Kim's suspicions being aroused at the last moment he failed to keep the appointment at which he was to have been killed. By and by, however, one of the conspirators succeeded in luring him to Shanghai upon some pretext or other, and he was shot to death in a native hotel there on the very night of his arrival. So far from arresting the murderer, the Chinese authorities sent him in all comfort, with the corpse of his victim, upon a Chinese gunboat to Korea, where he was received with rejoicings, loaded with honours and given official rank, while the body of Kim was publicly hacked in pieces, his head salted and promenaded through the principal cities,

and his relatives murdered. Thus the man who had raised the standard of revolt in Korea for Japanese ideas, and who had been received by Japan as an exile to be protected (just as we have received revolutionary exiles in England), was decoyed away to Chinese soil, murdered there with the almost certain connivance of China, his murderer treated with every consideration, and a Chinese Government vessel employed to take both assassin and victim to the honour and the degradation which respectively awaited them in Korea. This was enough to have provoked an outburst of popular anger in a much more sedate country than Japan, and it was while the Japanese were thus deeply indignant at this combination of Korean treachery and Chinese insult that Chinese troops were sent to Korea, and the irritating despatch sent, as I have described. The Japanese instantly despatched a still larger force, and the diplomatic negociations began.

It will be remembered that China raised no protest when Korea described herself as an independent State, and concluded foreign treaties upon that basis, and that she had further admitted Japan to equal rights with herself for the preservation of order in Korea. Yet the despatch announcing to Japan the departure of Chinese troops to Korea was couched in these words:—

"The application upon examination is found to be urgent both in words and in fact, and that it is in harmony with our constant practice to protect *our tributary states* by sending our troops to assist them. These circumstances were accordingly submitted to His Imperial Majesty, and in obedience to his will, General Yeh, Commander of troops in Chihli has been ordered to proceed at once to Zenra and Chinsei in Korea with selected troops, and to speedily suppress the disturbance in such manner as he may deem most convenient in order to restore the peace of *our tributary state* and to dispel the anxiety of the subjects of every nation residing in Korea for commercial purposes, and at the same time the General is commanded to return with the troops as soon as the desired object is attained."

By thus asserting at the outset the fact that China regarded Korea as a tributary State, the Chinese Government deliberately repudiated the past and challenged Japan to make good the

position which she had always maintained, and which had been formally recognised nine years before. A less conciliatory despatch—especially considering that Japan was smarting under the murder of Kim Ok-kyun—could not have been penned. The reply of the Japanese Government could easily have been foreseen. It was (June 7), "In reply, I beg to declare that, although the words 'tributary State' appear in your Note, the Imperial government has never recognised Korea as a tributary State of China." At the same time the Japanese Minister in Peking informed the Tsungli Yamên that, "owing to the existence of a disturbance of a grave nature in Korea necessitating the presence of Japanese troops there, it is the intention of the Imperial government to send a body of Japanese troops to that country." Two days later (June 9) the Tsungli Yamên, with extraordinary promptitude, replied as follows, and the despatch is worth giving at length, as it is so deliciously characteristic of Chinese diplomatic methods:—

"The sole object of your country in sending troops is evidently to protect the Legation, Consulates, and commercial people in Korea, and, consequently, it may not be necessary on the part of your country to despatch a great number of troops, and, besides, as no application therefore has been made by Korea, it is requested that no troops shall proceed to the interior of Korea so that they may not cause alarm to her people. And, moreover, since it is feared that in the event the soldiers of the two nations should meet on the way, cases of unexpected accident might occur, owing to the difference of language and military etiquette, we beg to request in addition that you will be good enough to telegraph the purport of this communication to the Government of Japan."

In the despatch China totally and calmly ignored the fact that by treaty Japan had identically the same rights as China to send troops to Korea! Of course the Japanese reply (June 12) pointed this out:—

"The Imperial Japanese Government has never recognised Korea as a tributary state of China. Japan despatched her troops in virtue of the Chemulpo Convention, and in so doing she has followed the procedure laid down in the Treaty of Tientsin. As to the number of troops, the Japanese Government is compelled to exercise its own judgment. Although no restriction is placed upon the movement of the Japanese troops, in Korea, they will not be sent where their presence is not deemed necessary.

The Japanese troops are under strict discipline, and the Japanese Government is confident that they will not precipitate a collision with the Chinese forces. It is hoped that China has adopted similar precautions."

This unanswerable despatch brought down the curtain upon the first act. Both Chinese and Japanese troops were in Korea, precisely as the Li-Ito Convention of 1885 had agreed that under such circumstances they should be. The Chinese Ministers had vainly endeavoured to wriggle out of their previous promises, and being unable to do so, this aspect of the matter disappeared.

The next step came from Japan, and took the form of the following proposals for the future administration of Korea (June 17):—

"As to the present events, Japan and China to unite their efforts for the speedy suppression of the disturbance of her insurgent people. After the suppression of the disturbance, Japan and China, with a view to the improvement of the internal administration of Korea, to respectively send a number of Commissioners charged with the duty of investigating measures of improvement, in the first place on the following general points:—(*a*) Examination of the financial administration. (*b*) Selection of the Central and Local Officials. (*c*) Establishment of an army necessary for national defence in order to preserve the peace of the land."

To this the Chinese Minister in Tokyo replied that the disturbance was already put down, and that reforms must be left to Korea herself. This suggestion was amusing enough, but the argument by which it was supported was farcical. H. E. Wang wrote: "Even China herself would not interfere with the internal administration of Korea, and Japan having from the very first recognised the independence of Korea, cannot have the right to interfere with the same." This is Chinese diplomacy at its happiest: first, Korea is not independent, but dependent upon China, and therefore Japan has no right to interfere; second, Korea is independent, even of China, and therefore again Japan has no right to interfere! Is it to be wondered at that Japan should brush aside diplomacy conducted with such puerile craft? The point to be borne in mind, however, is that Japan requested China to unite with her

in joint action for the reform and strengthening of an independent Korea, and that China refused to do so. The parallel of Great Britain, France and Egypt will occur to every reader. Japan had determined that this should be the last wrangle over Korea, and pursuing the parallel, she informed China in the following admirable despatch (June 22), that she should undertake the task single-handed if China persisted in her refusal:—

"The Imperial Government, much to its regret, finds it impossible to share the hopeful views entertained by your Excellency's Government regarding the actual situation in Korea at the present time. Sad experience teaches us that the Peninsular Kingdom is the theatre of political intrigues and civil revolts and disturbances of such frequent recurrence as to justify the conclusion that the Government of that country is lacking in some of the elements which are essential to responsible independence. The interests of Japan in Korea, arising from propinquity as well as commerce, are too important and far-reaching to allow her to view with indifference the deplorable condition of affairs in that kingdom. In the estimation of the Imperial Government the withdrawal of forces should be consequent upon the establishment of some understanding that will serve to guarantee the future peace, order, and good government of the country. That course of action is, moreover, it seems to his Imperial Majesty's Government, not only in perfect harmony with the spirit of the Tientsin Convention, but it accords with the dictates of reasonable precaution. Should the Government of China continue to hold views antagonistic to those which I have frankly and in good faith presented to your Excellency, it cannot be expected that the Imperial Government will, under the circumstances, feel at liberty to sanction the present retirement of their troops from Korea."

This was followed by a formal declaration to the Tsungli Yamên that "in this juncture the Imperial Japanese Government find themselves relieved of all responsibility for any eventuality that may, in future, arise out of the situation." China still did not realise the danger that lay before her, and tried one more piece of bluff by demanding that the withdrawal of the Japanese troops should precede any negociations. The Japanese, not being fools, dismissed that suggestion for what it was worth, and took an early occasion to inform China that any further despatch of troops to Korea would be regarded by Japan as a hostile act. Both countries had up to that point availed themselves of their rights under the Tientsin Convention,

and it could not be pretended that the Chinese and Japanese forces together were not abundantly capable of keeping order in Korea. For Japan to have allowed China to send reinforcements at this moment would have been an act of suicide. She knew Chinese methods far too well to permit anything of the kind. China's reply was to send the *Kowshing*, full of troops, relying upon the British flag to protect them on the sea. The *Chen Yuen* met the *Naniwa* at sea, fired upon her and steamed away (there seems no reason to doubt the statements to this effect), and shortly afterwards the *Naniwa* met the *Kowshing*, and on the latter failing to surrender, sunk her. I express no opinion upon the technical point of international law involved, though to a non-expert it seems clear enough, but it is probable that if the Japanese had committed an outrage upon the British flag on this occasion, they would have been brought to book for it before the lapse of five months. It is therefore fair to presume that they were within their rights. The Japanese declaration of war came on August 3, and that of China, affording a painful comparison by its tone and language, followed immediately. Subsequent events are too well known to need recapitulation; they may be summarised for the present in the four names, Asan, Phyŏng-yang, Yalu, and Port Arthur.

In Korea itself, in the meantime, little has happened. The anti-Japanese party has of course been thrust out of office, and replaced by politicians having presumably Japanese sympathies. The Government has vacillated, so far as was possible to it under the circumstances, between China and Japan, promising and intriguing first for one party and then for another. Naturally the official class has made every effort in its power to save its historic right to plunder the people. The Japanese have concluded a treaty with the King, to last till the conclusion of the war, by which his independence is guaranteed. This has, of course, no significance as indicating the sympathy of the King, as he had no choice but to accept it; but it is of importance as

putting the Japanese attitude formally on record. A number of reforms of a sweeping character have been imposed upon the government, and the only criticism that can be passed upon them is that they exhibit perhaps an undue confidence in the possible political development of the Korean character. As Japan, however, will be charged with carrying them out, she may well be left with the responsibility of having proposed them. As for the intrigues, the shilly-shallying, the professions of grateful friendship followed by hostile treachery, and these again succeeded by promises of faithfulness and pitiful revolts, they are but the natural consequences of stirring up an administration which has been well called a cesspool of corruption. The main fact is that Korea has come under the influence of Japan, and that under its influence she will remain.

Japan has one indisputable claim to her new sphere of interest: she has won it by the sword. That is the kind of right which the world most easily recognises. Moreover, she may put in an additional moral claim on the ground that her control will confer vast benefits upon the unfortunate Korean people. But beside these she has other very cogent justifications for her action. In the first place, it was she who opened Korea to foreign intercourse. And second, the greater part of Korea's modern trade has been created by Japan, and is in the hands of her merchants. Except with China and Japan, Korea has little trade worth mentioning, and the interest of the latter is exactly twice that of the former. The net value of Korean direct foreign trade for 1892 and 1893 together was 4,240,498 dollars with China, and 8,306,571 dollars with Japan. In tonnage of shipping the proportion was vastly greater in favour of Japan. Her tonnage in 1893 was over twenty times that of China, and the number of vessels entered and cleared was over twenty-five times. The exact figures are: tonnage—China, 14,376; Japan, 304,224: number of vessels—China, 37; Japan, 956. In fact, the tonnage of Japan's shipping trade with Korea last year was more than seven times that of all other nations put together,

including China. Many a western war has been fought to preserve a smaller actual and prospective commercial preponderance.

As regards the future, unless a great change has recently come over the diplomacy of Japan, it is Russia that she fears. The status of all the other European Powers in the Far East is approximately fixed. Spain and Portugal count for nothing. Japan could wipe out either of them. France will hardly claim to extend north and east of Tongking. Germany is making great progress with her trade, but she has no opportunity to seek territorial advantages. Great Britain has reached her limit, with the exception of the Malay Peninsula, which will certainly be hers sooner or later; of a naval base north of Hongkong; and of Siam, in which developments are possible; and Japan is not interested in two of these directions. But for Russia the Far East lies in the direct line of immediate expansion. The late Tsar made the path of international politics an easy and a pleasant one to tread, and his successor may be counted upon to preserve a similar attitude. But Japan has learned that nations have to reckon with the inevitable *Drang* of other nations, and that they cannot count for security upon the good-will of any individual. Japan has suffered once in a little transaction with Russia, when she exchanged Saghalin for the Kurile Islands. She has seen illegitimate European-directed sealing expeditions which sailed secretly from her shores fired upon murderously by armed parties in Russian waters, and no redress or even information has been obtainable. She has watched the Russian fleet come for its manœuvres year after year to the Korean bay in which lies Port Lazareff: only the other day a Russian cruiser, the *Vitiaz*, was lost there. She knows that the Russian Minister at Seoul has tried—as one of his own colleagues expressed it to me—to *jouer un grand rôle dans un petit trou*. She has applied to the Russian Minister and the Chinese Resident there the proverb that "two foxes cannot live in the same sack." She remembers when a Russian man-of-war—I think it was the *Vladimir Monomach*—

beat to quarters in Yokohama harbour and trained its guns upon an approaching British ship, and when she telegraphed down the coast for a little gunboat of her own which carried a 35-ton gun, and anchored it alongside the Russian, before sending on board to exact an apology for the breach of neutrality. The time for Russian action in the Far East may not be ripe yet, for it will be some time before the Trans-Siberian railway will be of any service. But sooner or later Russia will need a winter harbour in the Far East, and Japan knows that in Russian plans Port Lazareff has long been fixed upon as one of the two possible places. This would be a serious matter for Japan, and in her present state of mind I feel sure she would rather fight than yield it. Yet for my own part, as I have already said, I am convinced that the Russian terminus of the Trans-Siberian Railway will be (unless much bigger events take place) in Korean waters. The discussion of this eventuality, however, is connected with the momentous suggestion to which I have already alluded and which is treated in a later chapter, namely, that of Asia for the Asiatics. Of this, Europe is destined some day to hear not a little. But in connection with the immediate future of Korea it is of more interest to see exactly what is the present attitude of Russia as defined in the one international document upon the subject which has been published. Port Hamilton, it will be remembered, was occupied by British vessels under Vice-Admiral Sir W. Dowell in April, 1885, under instructions from Mr. Gladstone's Government. The naval authorities reported that it was worse than useless; protests were received from China, Japan, and Korea, and it was understood that if the occupation were persisted in, both Russia and Japan would seek some similar territorial strategic advantage. Lord Iddesleigh (a change of Ministries having meanwhile occurred) therefore confidentially advised the British Minister in Peking that the British Government would be prepared to evacuate Port Hamilton "if any suitable arrangement could be made which would ensure that neither it nor Port Lazareff

shall pass into hostile [that is, Russian] hands." An assurance to this effect was obtained by China from Russia, and communicated in the following terms, which now become once more of great importance :—

"Rumours have recently been disseminated from Corea that Russia was interfering with China's feudatory. The Chinese Government accordingly demanded an explanation from Russia as to the existence or otherwise of this fact, and in due course the Russian Foreign Office gave the Chinese Minister Liu the most frank assurances that the Russian Government had absolutely no such intentions. M. Ladygensky, the Russian Chargé d'Affaires at Peking, further went to Tient-sin at the orders of the Russian Foreign Office, and had several personal conversations with the Grand Secretary Li, Minister Superintendent of Northern Trade, to whom he repeated and enlarged upon the answer earlier given to the Minister Liu. He also stated that the Russian Government gave a sincere promise that if the British would evacuate Port Hamilton, *the Russian Government would not occupy Corean territory under any circumstances whatsoever.*

"The Grand Secretary Li, Minister Superintendent of Northern Trade, then told M. Ladygensky that what was feared was that after the British vessels of war had retired from these islands they would be again taken possession by some other Power. Russia, therefore, must guarantee that she would not hereafter seize these islands, and on the faith of this guarantee China could officially address the British Government, and urge their speedy evacuation.

"In the course of time M. Ladygensky, in obedience to instructions from the Russian Government, gave a most explicit guarantee, distinctly declaring that in the future Russia would not take Corean territory.

"The Chinese Government is therefore naturally in a position, on the faith of the guarantee of the Russian Government, to give a guarantee to the British Government." *

Port Hamilton was accordingly evacuated on February 27, 1887.

It will be observed that the Russian assurance came wholly through the Tsungli Yamên. We—the public, at least—have no other source of information concerning this assurance. We do not know what conditions may have been attached to it, or what was the exact form taken by M. Ladygensky's "explicit guarantee." At the time this was given, China's pledge was sufficient, because it was then believed that China would have been a valuable ally in case war had resulted from the breaking of the promise. But China is now known to be virtually worthless

* The Tsungli Yamên to Sir J. Walsham, Peking, October 31, 1886. China, No. 1 (1887), p. 38.

as a fighting force, yet we have only her word that Russia promised, years before the Trans-Siberian Railway was sanctioned, that she "would not occupy Korean territory under any circumstances whatsoever." And the word of China, on such a matter at such a moment, is not worth to-day the paper on which it was written. Such, then, is the position of Russia in this question; China has been brushed aside; Korea will doubtless be left independent under a more or less defined Japanese protection; and Japan is left face to face with a problematical future.

JAPAN.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE JAPAN OF TO-DAY.

JAPAN has at length come into her inheritance. Kossuth is reported to have said that the two most wonderful men in the world were Prince Bismarck and the Emperor of Japan. From one of these the wonder has somewhat abated of late, but the country of the other has finally imposed itself upon the somewhat unwilling recognition of the West. The "child of the world's old age" has proved to be its most remarkable offspring. Until to-day, however, the world has not taken Japan quite seriously, in spite of the thousands of travellers who have visited her and the hundreds of volumes that have been written about her. But now that she has been seen sword in hand, sweeping the Chinese hordes out of Korea and Manchuria, driving the Chinese ships off the sea, and capturing their principal fortress in the course of a morning, and at the same time concluding a treaty with Great Britain on equal terms, Japan stands no longer in need of the encomiums and the prophecies of her friends. Her leap from feudalism to modernity is without parallel, but everybody appreciates it now. In a quarter of a century she has sprung from an Oriental despotism, hating foreigners above all else, and differing only from other Oriental despotisms by the fact that the ruling influence among her people was one of the strictest, loftiest, and most punctilious codes of honour that man has ever devised, to a nation whose army and navy may meet those of contemporary Europe on equal terms; whose laws will bear comparison with any in

existence; whose manufactures are driving western producers from the field; whose art-work has created a new standard of taste abroad; whose education has produced a band of experts second to none—it was a Japanese physician who first discovered the bacillus of the bubonic plague in Hongkong; whose colonising strength suggests more than one alteration of the map of Asia; whose official statistics, for truthfulness and elaboration, leave those of many western countries far behind—her last Budget covers 1,438 printed pages; whose people are simply thirsting for fresh fields to conquer, and scorn the mere idea of failure. All this, however, has become a commonplace of information, and so far as I am concerned, I have written about it in so much detail elsewhere,* that here I propose only to touch upon two or three aspects of Japanese life which characterise her more intimately to-day than ever before.

The first aspect under which the world must now regard Japan with respectful interest is that of a first-class Power. Four years ago I wrote that the Japanese army was virtually a European force, and that it might be counted upon to make a desperate fight against any enemy in the world. To-day there is no longer any need to dwell upon the armed strength of Japan, since war—the supreme test of paper and parade-ground dispositions—has tried it. The Japanese army and navy have proved themselves more than equal to the physical estimate that their admirers had formed of them. As rapidly as Germany when Von Moltke telegraphed "Krieg mobil," the army was ready. Force after force was despatched with a secrecy, a simplicity, a celerity and a completeness that few European nations could equal; the reserves came to the colours with a mechanical precision; and this time literally not a gaiter-button, in Marshal Lebœuf's famous phrase, was lacking from their equipment. Every European expert has been enthusiastic in his praise of the perfection of Japanese methods, the

* In my book entitled "The Real Japan: Studies in Japanese Manners, Morals, Administration and Politics," London: T. Fisher Unwin, fourth edition, 1894.

discipline of Japanese men, and the scientific tactics of Japanese officers; while the succession of brilliant victories tells its own tale of the primal virtue of courage. Of this the vernacular papers have been full of stories, one of which I will quote as typical of the Japanese people. At the battle of Sŏng-hwan a bugler named Genjiro stood beside Captain Matsuzaki, when a bullet struck him in the chest. Though knowing he was seriously wounded, he continued to blow until breath failed him and he fell dead where he had stood. The so-called "Christian Patriotic Relief Corps" of his native village of Funaomura collected a few presents to send to his family—who were people in the humblest circumstances—with a letter of consolation; the headman collected the people of the village, the gifts were presented by the local member of Parliament, and in reply Genjiro's father spoke as follows:—"It is the lot of all men to die. My son had to die some time. Instead of falling asleep in a corner of this miserable hovel, unmourned save by a few relatives, he has fallén on the field of honour and received the praise of a multitude of his superiors. Hence his mother and I cannot look upon this as a mournful occasion. We rejoice that our son has been loyal to Japan, even to the point of shedding his blood in defence of her honour."

The Japanese army consists to-day of the Imperial Guard, and six Divisions with headquarters in the principal districts of the country. These average about 10,000 men each, and to each is allotted a First and Second Reserve. According to the latest statistics, the total strength is as follows:—

	With the Colours.	First Reserve.	Second Reserve.	
Imperial Guard	6,530	8,610	5,507	
First Division (Tokyo)	10,068	15,549	19,870	
Second Division (Sendai)	8,892	16,428	20,002	
Third Division (Nagoya).....	9,011	13,912	15,897	
Fourth Division (Osaka).....	9,157	14,876	15,595	
Fifth Division (Hiroshima) ..	8,882	13,462	17,077	
Sixth Division (Kumamoto) ..	9,885	14,870	16,039	
Total	62,425	97,707	109,987	270,119

The actual fighting force of Japan, therefore, without taking into account the large numbers of less-trained levies she could raise in dire extremity, amounts to at least 250,000 men. It is sufficient to add that a force of this strength, armed, drilled, equipped, and led as the Japanese army is, renders Japan the leading Power of Asia so far as operations on land are concerned.

Japan might well have raised and perfected this force without having developed the moral qualities which are as essential as mere strength to the proper conception of a Great Power. That she realises the imperative need of these—apart from the tributes that have been paid to her troops for their admirable behaviour, and the consideration with which they have treated the people among whom they have been quartered, —a single example may suffice to show. Soon after the declaration of war the following proclamation was made to the Japanese army by Count Oyama, the Minister for War, who subsequently took command of the Second Army, and so successfully attacked Port Arthur :—

Belligerent operations being properly confined to the military and naval forces actually engaged, and there being no reason whatever for enmity between individuals because their countries are at war, the common principles of humanity dictate that succour and rescue should be extended even to those of the enemy's forces who are disabled either by wounds or disease. In obedience to these principles, civilised nations in time of peace enter into conventions to mutually assist disabled persons in time of war without distinction of friend or foe. This humane union is called the Geneva Convention, or more commonly the Red Cross Association. Japan became a party to it in June, 1886, and her soldiers have already been instructed that they are bound to treat with kindness and helpfulness such of their enemies as may be disabled by wounds or disease. China not having joined any such Convention, it is possible that her soldiers, ignorant of these enlightened principles, may subject diseased or wounded Japanese to merciless treatment. Against such contingencies the Japanese troops must be on their guard. But at the same time they must never forget that however cruel and vindictive the foe may show himself, he must nevertheless be treated in accordance with the acknowledged rules of civilisation; his disabled must be succoured and his captured kindly and considerately protected.

It is not alone to those disabled by wounds or sickness that merciful and gentle treatment should be extended. Similar treatment is also due to those who offer no resistance to our arms. Even the body of a dead enemy should be treated with respect. We cannot too much admire the course pursued by a certain Western country which in handing over an enemy's general complied with all the rites and

ceremonies suitable to the rank of the captive. Japanese soldiers should always bear in mind the gracious benevolence of their august Sovereign and should not be more anxious to display courage than charity. They have now an opportunity to afford practical proof of the value they attach to these principles.

(Signed) Oyama Iwao, Count,
Minister of State for War.

September 22nd, 27th year of *Meiji*.

It is perhaps not too much to say that in the history of warfare no army has ever been sent to the front with a more admirable exhortation. For the sake of contrast, it may be recalled that at this time Chinese Viceroys were offering and paying rewards for the heads and hands of Japanese soldiers, and that Chinese officers, as an eyewitness has testified, were claiming and receiving them. It was rumoured that one of the conditions of peace to be insisted upon by Japan was that the Chinese officials who had been guilty of this barbarity should be handed over to them for execution. The rumour was denied, but, for my own part, I am sorry it was not true, since one lesson of this kind would have taught China more civilisation than she has learned during the last thousand years.

The Japanese people have exhibited the greatest patriotism and enthusiasm for this war, and if their own newspapers may be trusted, chiefly because its result was to be the carrying of Japanese enlightenment into the darkest country of Asia. An enormous sum was subscribed in a few weeks and voluntarily presented to the Government. When a loan of 50,000,000 dols. was asked for, 77,000,000 were promptly offered. Not for one moment has the slightest doubt of the result of the war been felt. Certain foreigners, says the *Japan Mail*, were expressing surprise at the quiet manner in which the announcement of the victory of the Yalu was received in Tokyo. "The reply was eminently characteristic of the Japanese. 'But this is only what we knew would happen; it was a matter of course; why should there be any unusual display or demonstration if the victory of our arms was positively assured from the outset?'" Yet the one point upon which the Japanese might well have felt

considerable anxiety was the question of their equality with the Chinese at sea, especially as the great fight, when it came, was bound to be to a large extent one of cruisers against ironclads.

One other point only calls for comment in this connection. European writers, knowing in most cases little of the extreme strictness of Japanese military organisation, have frequently said that both the Japanese and Chinese accounts of what had happened must be received with equal scepticism until supported by independent testimony. The correspondents at Shanghai—who have been responsible for an almost unbroken succession of misstatements concerning the war—have constantly made this assertion. It is so baseless as to be ridiculous. Not in one single instance has the official report by the responsible Japanese commander been shown to deviate by a hair's breadth from the exact truth so far as he could possibly know it. All Japanese statistics, as I have said, are compiled with more than German detail and scrupulousness; every Japanese soldier wears a metal disc slung round his neck for purposes of identification; and the most precise detail of every action either has been published or will be when the history of the war comes to be written. A friend at the centre of affairs in Japan wrote to me upon this point as follows:—"It has always to be remembered, in judging between Chinese and Japanese accounts, that the former emanate from private and irresponsible sources, the latter from official ones. The salient features of every fight are reported by the Japanese Admiral or General in command, and the report is published by the Government. Any wilful perversions of facts would involve a court-martial for the officer, and would bring the political house about the Government's ears."

The second aspect under which the progress of Japan is of great interest to western nations, is that of a rival in manufactures. This is a far more serious question, especially to Great Britain, than is yet generally understood. The truth is that our manufacturers are actually being driven out of many markets of the East by the Japanese, and that the most com-

petent observers prophesy the rapid development of this process. The circumstances under which the war almost produced a commercial crisis in Japan, bear striking testimony to the growth of Japanese manufacturing interests. In 1893, there were about a quarter of a million cotton spindles in Japan; this year there are over half a million. On July 6th, the Osaka branch of the Bank of Japan had 6,000,000 dols. advanced for the purchase of raw cotton; when the war came, however, the banks withdrew a good deal of their credit, and the cotton-spinning companies found themselves threatened with ruin at a moment when their trade afforded the most legitimate justification for extension. Under these circumstances a panic was only averted by the promise of the Government to give assistance. In 1875, there was no cotton-spinning in Japan, as in that year the first European machines, of small capacity, were introduced. The following table, compiled by a Japanese economist, shows the rate of progress since then, with the inevitable corresponding decline of imports from Great Britain and India:—

	National Production in Japanese lbs.	Foreign Imports in English lbs.
1888	... 956,804 ...	47,439,639
1889	... 20,952,687 ...	42,810,912
1890	... 32,217,456 ...	31,908,302
1891	... 45,306,444 ...	17,337,600
1892	... 64,046,925 ...	24,308,491

And new companies are being formed in Japan even at this moment, with a total capital of over 2,500,000 dols.

The skill and intelligence of the Japanese at all handicrafts is a matter of common knowledge; and considering at the same time the low rate of its remuneration, Japanese labour is beyond all comparison the cheapest in the world. In Miiki wages averaged last year, according to the British Consul's report, 17·37 *sen* (about 5d.) a day per man, and 7·85 *sen* per woman; at Kurume, 15·05 *sen* per man, and 9·95 *sen* per woman; at Kagoshima 15·35 *sen* per man, and 5·57 *sen* per woman. At the last-mentioned place the day averaged 10½ hours, while at

Miiki and Kurume the spindles were working 23 hours and 24 hours a day throughout the year, excepting holidays. At Osaka, the chief Japanese manufacturing centre, men earned from 6d. to 2s. 4d. a day, and women from 1½d. to 5d.; girls, eight or nine years old, worked 12 hours a day for 3d. Many of the mills run for 24 hours a day, in two shifts of 12 hours each, with a total allowance of forty minutes for meals. Moreover, the Diet is about to press the Government to remove or greatly modify the import and export duties upon cotton, which will probably be done, and the manufacture thus receive a very stimulating bonus. It is not only in cotton, however, that the Japanese are competing favourably with western nations. A "Japan Watch Company," of Yokohama, is about to commence the manufacture of watches on a large scale; it has procured the finest watch-making machinery from America, and has erected engines of one hundred horse power to run it. This is an enterprise for which Japanese labour is peculiarly adapted, and with the inexhaustible market of the East to supply, the promoters are probably not too sanguine in anticipating a great success. In match-making, again, the Japanese manufacturers have driven all competitors out of the East. "There is no doubt," says Mr. J. H. Gubbins, Secretary of the British Legation in Tokyo, "that so far as the Eastern market is concerned, no country can any longer compete with Japan in this particular industry." Five million gross went last year to Hongkong alone. Already Japan is manufacturing the rolling-stock for the Korean railway to be built. In every Consular and Customs Report the same story of Japanese competition is told. Japanese cotton goods have got as far as the Straits, and her clocks have already beaten even the countrymen of Sam Slick in that market. Fifteen hundred dozen undershirts came to Singapore in one recent consignment. From Macao Mr. Brennan writes:—"The articles from Japan at present consist of curios, cotton cloths, blankets, flannels, hosiery, soaps, lamps, tea-kettles, matches, hats, umbrellas, Gladstone bags,

silks, and such like. To give an idea of the cheapness, I may say that umbrellas of European pattern cost 30 cents to 1 dol. (11d. to 2s. 2d.), and cotton crapes 1 dol. to 1 dol. 20 cents a piece of 20 yards, that is 2s. 2d. to 2s. 7d. These are of fine texture and nice appearance, so that they are much appreciated by Chinese and Europeans, and worn as dresses and shirts. Indeed, the competition of Japanese goods is sure to become keener in course of time." At Tamsui, Japanese towelling has taken the place of former importations, and the import of Japanese cottons in 1893 was 20 per cent. greater than in 1892. The export of matting from Japan in 1893 was double that of 1892. At Niuchuang, Japanese flannel, blankets, brass buttons, lamps, umbrellas, pictures and mirrors, are becoming important items. At Ningpo, hundreds of hand-gins of Japanese make have been imported. The following report concerning the Korean market is worth quoting at length:—

"It may not be out of place to remark here that while the bulk of the Piece Goods and Metals sold in Fusan are of European origin, principally British, the fact should not be overlooked that Japan, by carefully studying arising needs, and supplying articles suitable to the tastes and means of Koreans and her Fusan colonists, is able to compete, more successfully each year, with almost all the goods of European manufacture. In no place, perhaps, is this rapidly growing competition more patent than in Fusan, where can be seen in the shops of the Settlement imitations of nearly all the Western goods and wares named in our Returns, from Piece Goods downwards. Besides these, there are Foreign-style suits, underclothing and hose, felt and straw hats, household furniture and culinary utensils, carpets, glassware, chinaware, lamps and fittings, soaps, scents, tinned provisions (fish, meat, and vegetables), wines and beer, farming implements, &c., mostly made in Osaka and selling at prices very much cheaper than those of Western manufacture. Whether Europe's persistent adherence to the gold standard is solely responsible or not for this state of affairs is a question well worthy of consideration; but certainly the rate of exchange seems to have a great deal to do with it. Another question presents itself: Is it not highly probable that, at no distant date, Japan—with better machinery, added to the advantages she already possesses in cheap labour, and the (to her) favourable exchange now ruling—will run European manufactures entirely off the Eastern markets?" *

Finally, I may take from the last report of Mr. Troup, the British Consul at Yokohama, the striking statement that, "to say the least, the trade in imports seems likely to suffer great

* Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs. Mr. Hunt's Report for Fusan, 1893.

restrictions, and, in the case of articles which come into competition with home Japanese manufactures, probable extinction." Between 1873 and 1892, the imports of Japan only rose from 26,000,000 dols. to 74,000,000 dols., while her exports increased from 20,000,000 dols. to 91,000,000 dols. In view of all these facts, and the improbability of any legislation in the direction of bi-metallism coming to the rescue of the British manufacturer, we cannot find much comfort in the fact that the percentage of the total foreign trade of Japan for 1892 was 35 per cent. for the British Empire, against 27 per cent. for the United States, 14 per cent. for France, 12 per cent. for China, and 4 per cent. for Germany. It is only too clear that in the future Japan is certain to be as keen a competitor in the peaceful arts of commerce as she might possibly be a dangerous enemy in the "trampled lanes of war."

The greatest ambition of Japan has been realised. She has always wanted to whip China, but far more, of late years, has she desired to be recognised by European Powers as on a level with themselves. Till this happened, she has felt that all she did was admired as one admires the precocity of a child; that her achievements were regarded as clever imitations; that the praise lavished upon her was a species of charity. And she was quite right. It had never occurred to the statesmen of Europe that Japan possessed, behind all her cleverness and her genius, a spirit of true originality, a creative power, in the great things of life—politics, administration, morals, science, and art; nor that the failure on their part to see this was the great thorn in the side of Japan. It must be borne in mind, in order to estimate this feeling, that while on the one hand Japan had an army which was not much inferior to any army in the world of its size, a navy small but first-rate in quality, a growing system of manufactures which threatened the predominance of western competitors, a development of scientific knowledge that was the surprise of all who understood it, and a political system of which the least that could be said was that it was based on the best

models, she was at the same time unable to exercise the least jurisdiction over the criminal foreigner in her midst, that her Customs system was dictated to her by foreign treaties, and that before she could make any change in these treaties she must procure the consent, not only of the really great Powers, but also of Switzerland, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Holland, Sweden, Hawaii, and Peru. Many of Japan's friends —*quorum pars minima fui*—had urged her to "denounce" the treaties—to give formal notice that after a certain date she would no longer recognise their validity. This would have been strictly within her rights, for the American diplomatist who had dictated the words of the first modern treaty of a foreign Power with Japan had expressed his regret that words he had inserted as giving to Japan the concession of revising her own treaties, had been distorted by other Powers into the claim of a right on their part to interfere in this. And it would have been well within her ability, too, for it was known that several of the great Treaty Powers would not have dreamed of fighting for their treaties, and that in their absence the others would not have found it convenient to do so. But Japan adhered to the slower though less risky processes of negociation. The result was that the conditions of 1866 remained those of 1894. The Japan of feudalism was to Europe the Japan of modern times. Some two thousand five hundred strangers dwelt within her borders, and in order that the personal and commercial privileges of these might be safeguarded, Japan had no power over her own tariff and was compelled to tax her agricultural class excessively to provide a revenue; she had no jurisdiction over a single foreigner; she was unable to tax the foreigners who prospered by her trade; and while she had spent five million dollars in lighting and buoying her coasts she could not make foreign ships pay either light, tonnage, or harbour dues. Yet by treaty she was entitled to shake off these trammels. Is it surprising that when the Japanese people gradually awoke to a realisation of this fact, and the further one that foreigners were deliberately delaying any reform

in her interests, an anti-foreign spirit grew up and manifested itself in offensive ways?

In 1882 Count Inouye proposed that Japan should be opened to foreign trade, in return for the abolition of Consular jurisdiction, and that foreign judges should sit in a majority with Japanese judges when foreigners were tried by her new codes. This was rejected by the Powers, Great Britain leading the opposition. In 1884 it was proposed to Japan that she should have a limited jurisdiction over foreigners in return for the opening of a few more "accessible ports" to trade. Her reply was of course that she desired to have complete jurisdiction and was prepared to open her whole country. In 1886 a Conference of the sixteen Treaty Powers was held with Japan, and after a year's discussion, it was solemnly proposed to Japan that she should set up an array of highly-paid foreign judges, with a staff of foreign interpreters to render the evidence and their judgments from half a dozen foreign languages into Japanese and back, and that for fifteen years to come every change of every Japanese code should be "communicated" to every one of the sixteen Powers—to Belgium, to Denmark, to Portugal, to Hawaii, to Peru!—for its approval. So anxious was Count Inouye to get the great question settled that he even accepted these terms, but the moment they were understood in Japan a storm of public indignation sprang up and drove him from office. He was succeeded by Count Okuma, who approached the sixteen Powers separately and proposed that the revised Codes should be promulgated in English for two years before the abolition of Consular jurisdiction, and that foreign judges should sit in a majority in all cases affecting foreigners. In return he would throw open Japan to foreign residence and trade. To these proposals the United States, Germany, Russia and France agreed. Great Britain, unfortunately, still hung back. Again Japanese public opinion manifested the greatest hostility, and the natural demand was made that the question should be left for the decision of the Diet, which was just about to assemble for the first time. The

Cabinet resigned in a body, and a fanatic lay in wait for Count Okuma at the gate of the Foreign Office, threw a dynamite bomb at him, shattering one of his legs, and then and there cut his own throat and fell dead. It has been told me by a foreigner who was engaged at the Foreign Office on that day that public opinion was so charged with anger that everybody was expecting something dreadful to happen, and when the explosion was heard all present knew in a moment what it must be. Viscount Aoki succeeded Count Okuma as Minister for Foreign Affairs, and made new tentatives towards settling the Treaty Revision Question, but in vain. An anti-foreign feeling had now taken deep root, and the watchward of all parties was, "A treaty on terms of absolute equality." And that is what has taken place. Viscount Aoki has been more fortunate as Ambassador than as Foreign Minister, and he has concluded with Great Britain a treaty which gives to Japan everything that she desires. Treaties with the United States, Germany, France, and Russia will of course follow immediately. Japan acquires her complete judicial autonomy after a period of at least five years, when the treaty takes effect, and it remains in force for a period of twelve years. A revised tariff would go into operation a month after the exchange of ratifications, except for the "most favoured nation" clause in the Japanese treaties with other Powers; she will not, therefore, be able to avail herself of this until she has concluded similar treaties with them.

On the expiration of the treaty—that is to say, seventeen years from the present time—Japan comes into possession of her complete tariff autonomy also. During the next five years Japan agrees to issue passports, available for twelve months, to all accredited British subjects; and by the treaty the whole of Japan is thrown open to British trade, travel, and residence, and British subjects are placed in every respect on a par with Japanese, with certain exceptions. On the one hand, they are exempted from compulsory military service, and from any pecuniary burden in connection with it; and on the other,

they are not allowed to own land or to engage in the coasting trade, except between certain specified ports. Everything except land they may own in the interior, but that they can only acquire by lease, and according to the Japanese laws and customs these leases will probably be for thirty and fifty years. The prohibition of land-owning by foreigners will be seen when looked at from the point of view of the Japanese to be a reasonable measure of self-protection. If wealthy foreigners were allowed to acquire by purchase vast tracts of land in Japan it is easy to see how serious political and other difficulties might arise. Japanese capitalists could not enter into competition with the capitalists of Europe. By this treaty for the first time Japanese subjects are accorded in Great Britain the same rights and privileges as British subjects; this has hitherto been a matter of courtesy, and not of right. The Japanese Codes, as is well known, have been drawn up by European experts and are equal, theoretically, to any criminal and civil codes in the world; and during the five years which must elapse before foreigners come under their operation the Japanese judges will have a further considerable experience in the administration of them. Considering, moreover, that it is the very legitimate ambition of the Japanese so to act in all public matters as to be above the criticism of western nations, there is no reason to fear that any miscarriage of justice towards foreigners will ensue. Should the arrangement, however, prove unsatisfactory in any way, it must be remembered that the British Government were repeatedly offered by Japan terms of treaty revision which included foreign judges upon the Japanese Bench when the interests of foreigners were concerned, and that having refused these terms they have now accepted the present much less advantageous ones. So far as Great Britain is concerned it is the story of the Sibylline books: we have paid more in the end for less than we were offered at the beginning. But there can be no doubt whatever of the absolute justice of this treaty, and it should be a

matter of pride to us, no less than of satisfaction at the expediency of the act, that we have been the first nation to recognise the just claims of Japan to be regarded as a civilised country. Our hesitation to do so for many years produced much hard feeling against us, but this is now replaced by a feeling of grateful appreciation that we have at last led the way where other nations must inevitably follow. Thus Japan enters —first of all eastern countries—into the charmed circle of the civilised Powers, and the dearest wish of her heart is at length gratified.

The Japan of to-morrow has nothing to fear except from herself. There are certain signs of threatening dangers, however, which students of her history and critics of her institutions cannot overlook. The first of these springs from her very success in rivalling western nations in their manufacturing industries. While we have succeeded, after many struggles, in mitigating the horrors of the old factory system, and are still occupied in devising fresh safeguards for the future, Japan is complacently allowing identical evils to grow up in her midst. It is time for her to realise that even though her army and navy become the most powerful in the world, the title of "civilised" cannot properly apply to her so long as young children work twelve hours a day in her factories. The character of her people, to which is due in the last analysis every success that she has achieved, has sprung from the free development of individual character, and it is seriously threatened by the rapid growth of great manufacturing industries, which tend, when unrestricted, to reduce the individual man to a mere cog in the mechanism, and which eat up the lives of women and children. Upon this point I may be permitted to repeat what I have said before. When Japan rings with the rattle of machinery; when the railway has become a feature of her scenery; when the boiler-chimney has defaced her choicest spots as the paper-makers have already obliterated the delights of Oji; when the traditions of *yashiki* and *shizoku* alike are all finally engulfed in the barrack-

room; when her art reckons its output by the thousand dozen; when the power in the land is shared between the professional politician and the plutocrat; when the peasant has been exchanged for the "factory hand," the *kimono* for the slop-suit, the tea-house for the music-hall, the *geisha* for the *lion comique*, and the *daimio* for the beer-peer—Japan will have good cause to doubt whether she has made a wise bargain. Her greatest triumph will come, if ever, when she has shown that while adapting and even improving the western methods of influence and power, she is able to guard herself from falling into the slough of social and economical difficulties in which European and American societies are wallowing, and from which one may almost doubt whether they will succeed in emerging without leaving civilisation behind them for good.

The second danger lying ahead of Japan may spring from her own excessive zeal. She has been so marvellously successful that she may be apt to believe she cannot fail. "Let him that thinketh he standeth beware lest he fall." If the Japanese politician becomes enamoured of Utopias and panaceas; if he believes that, in the future as in the past, his own country can do in a decade what it has taken other nations a century to accomplish; if he does not realise that the difficulties ahead are infinitely greater and more trying than those which have been overcome, he may plunge Japan into a bottomless pit of troubles. There are still in modern Japan all the elements for civil explosion, and serious economic and political difficulties would undoubtedly bring these into action.

Excess of zeal has already brought about a virtual deadlock in the most vital institution of modern Japan—its Parliamentary system. This has hardly been in existence four years, yet during that time it has developed more than one sharp conflict between the Emperor and the deputies; the Diet has been several times prorogued and twice dissolved; it has expelled its President; it is split up into innumerable and almost incomprehensible factions; it has been the scene of many unseemly

demonstrations; and it has formally declared itself in direct conflict with the provisions of the Constitution of 1889. A majority of the Diet is bent upon securing the system of party Cabinets, which rise and fall in accordance with party votes. This the Constitution expressly avoids. The Japanese Cabinet is the Government of the Emperor; nominally he is its head, but actually he is only its figure-head; a majority, therefore, in appealing to him over the heads of the Cabinet, is striking a blow at the heart of the Constitution. The situation is a very difficult and even dangerous one, for representative government almost necessarily involves government by party, yet in the present fluid state of Japanese political thought, under a party system there would be no guarantee whatever of stability or continuity. Nor does Japan as yet seem to have produced any great party-leaders. Moreover, her politics shows an unfortunate tendency to violence. There is a class of unemployed rowdies, called *soshi*, descendants by practice of the old *ronins* and corresponding roughly to the "heelers" of Tammany, who hire themselves out regularly, especially at election times, to the highest bidder, for any disreputable purposes, from breaking up meetings to bludgeoning candidates, or even assassinating political opponents. When to all this is added the further fact that the great clan jealousies of ante-Restoration times are still smouldering, and that Satsuma and Choshiu live in harmony chiefly because they divide political power between them, it will be seen that in her new-found politics, too, Japan may find many a danger to her national welfare. For myself I believe that when these dangers loom a little nearer and in their true proportions, the Japanese people will have wisdom and sobriety enough to avoid them, but no foreign friend of Japan should fail to sound a note of grave alarm.

Of all excessive zeal, however, the most dangerous will be excess of military zeal. There has always been a war party in Japan, and it has looked for years with eagerness to a struggle with China. This has now taken place,

and its results are not likely to be pacific; on the contrary, the party of a so-called "strong foreign policy" will be justified in the eyes of all men. And as there is no longer any eastern Power to fight, the "strong" party of the future can only turn its eyes towards some nation of the West. Lest it be thought that I am exaggerating Japanese confidence and ambition, I will quote the following extraordinary passage from a recent speech of no less distinguished a person than Count Okuma himself, ex-Minister for Foreign Affairs :—

"The European Powers are already showing symptoms of decay, and the next century will see their constitutions shattered and their empires in ruins. Even if this should not quite happen, their resources will have become exhausted in unsuccessful attempts at colonisation. Therefore who is fit to be their proper successors if not ourselves? What nation except Germany, France, Russia, Austria, and Italy can put 200,000 men into the field inside of a month? As to their finance, there is no country where the disposal of surplus revenue gives rise to so much political discussion. As to intellectual power, the Japanese mind is in every way equal to the European mind. More than this, have not the Japanese opened a way to the perfection of a discovery in which foreigners have not succeeded even after years of labour? Our people astonish even the French, who are the most skilful among artisans, by the cleverness of their work. It is true the Japanese are small of stature, but the superiority of the body depends more on its constitution than on its size. If treaty revision were completed, and Japan completely victorious over China, we should become one of the chief Powers of the world, and no Power could engage in any movement without first consulting us. Japan could then enter into competition with Europe as the representative of the Oriental races."

One of the best friends Japan has ever had, the man who knows her better than any other foreigner, has recently written that Japan stands in great need of a peace party at this moment. "Experience has taught us to dread one thing in Japan above all others—fashion. . . . It may seem premature to speak of this, but in truth we dread lest war become the fashion in Japan, so that success, instead of bringing contentment, may merely fire ambition. A peace party is wanted; that is to say, a party prepared to hold the nation back when the time for halting shall have fairly arrived." * Captain Brinkley further points out that the spectacle of the present war is not offered

* *The Japan Weekly Mail*, August 25, 1894.

gratis to western Powers, but that each pays for witnessing it the price of interrupted or crippled trade, and that they "will not sit idle if they see Japan fighting merely for lust of fighting or of conquest." Japan, if she is wise, will find in solving the great problems of peace, chief among which will be the education of the masses of her people up to the standard of profession and practice reached by her ruling and educated classes, a sufficient occupation for all her genius.

CHAPTER XXV.

ASIA FOR THE ASIATICS?

WHEN peace is concluded between Japan and China, the difficulties of the war—to speak in paradox—will begin. Up to the present time it has been plain sailing for everybody concerned in the struggle, directly and indirectly, except China, and her humiliation is a matter which no one except a partisan of savagery can regret for a moment. The time is rapidly approaching, however, when Japan must show her hand, and then she will find herself face to face, across the carcase of her defeated foe, with all the combined rivalry and mutual jealousies of the European Powers. That moment will be a momentous one for all parties, especially for Japan and for ourselves. It is, of course, a risky matter to prophesy concerning the next six months, since it is an open secret that no Foreign Office in Europe has any accurate knowledge of the conditions Japan will demand. Moreover, there are some aspects of the situation which cannot yet be even discreetly discussed. But so far as may be possible, the situation is one which Englishmen, of all people, should consider carefully beforehand, for upon its development hang very great issues for themselves.

There exists in Japan, in the minds of the intelligent among her citizens no less than among her publicists, her soldiers, and her diplomatists, a sentiment which is seldom mentioned there, and which, so far as I know, has hardly been hinted at in Europe. That sentiment is summed up in four words: Asia for the Asiatics. Herein, I am convinced, lie the germs of the most

momentous events in the relationships of nations since Napoleon Bonaparte was exiled to St. Helena. To appreciate this, let us first glance at the situation as a reasonable forecast pictures it.

It is assumed that Japan crushes China and is requested to table the terms on which she will make peace. These may be, first, the complete autonomy of Korea under Japanese protection, and with a Japanese force stationed at Wiju; second, an indemnity of £50,000,000; third, the occupation of Port Arthur as a strategical guarantee, and possibly the control of the Chinese Customs Office at Shanghai as a pecuniary guarantee, until the above sum is paid; fourth, the formal recognition of Japanese rights over the Liuchiu Islands, and the cession of Formosa. These would constitute a splendid set of conditions for the victor, and all things considered, they could hardly be described as extravagant, since with regard to Formosa, the most contentious point, China informed Japan in 1873 that she could not be responsible for an attack upon Japanese subjects by the Formosan people. But would even these conditions wholly satisfy the people of Japan? I do not hesitate to say they would not.

Japan has already fixed her eyes upon the future, and what she sees there alarms her, as well it may. Japan is a little country, with 40,000,000 of people. China is a huge country, with 350,000,000. China could easily bring 500,000 men of splendid physique to the colours; she could engage European or American officers and teachers to bring them gradually under military discipline and instruction; well paid and fairly treated the soldiers would be as good a mass of *Kanonenfutter* as need be; she could arm them with repeating rifles and quick-firing field-pieces; she could buy herself a new fleet and place it under the absolute control of foreign officers. It is inconceivable that even China, if she ever escapes from the consequences of this war, should not have learned her lesson at last. Then in ten or fifteen years' time she would be a really great Power. During this period Japan would have been compelled to increase her army and her

navy, and to support a constantly growing burden of military expenditure; and at its close the whole struggle would be to wage over again under conditions infinitely less favourable to herself. The leading vernacular journals have already declared frankly that this must not be permitted at any cost. Taking once more the Japanese point of view, it cannot be asserted that this is unreasonable. The question then recurs, what does Japan want?

This brings us back to the aforesaid undercurrent of national sentiment in Japan which would express itself, if it spoke at all, in the declaration, "Asia for the Asiatics." In other words, I am able to say from positive knowledge that the Government of Japan has conceived a parallel to the Monroe Doctrine for the Far East, with herself at its centre. The words of President Monroe, in his famous Message of 1823, in which this doctrine was first promulgated, express exactly, with the change of the one word I have italicised, the views of the chief Japanese statesmen of to-day: "With the existing colonies or dependencies of any European power we have not interfered, and shall not interfere; but with the governments which have declared their independence and maintained it, and whose independence we have, on great consideration and just principles, acknowledged, we could not view an interposition for oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner their destiny by any European power, in any other light than as a manifestation of an unfriendly disposition toward *Japan*." After all, Japan says—and the assertion is true—Asia is Asia, and between the Asiatic and the European, however keen may be the commercial instincts of the latter, or however progressive the temperament of the former, there is an everlasting gulf. We have found out —or we shall do so—in India, that in Mr. Kipling's words, "East is East, and West is West." We may like Japan and admire her and trade with her—and for my part I do not think it possible to know Japan without both liking and admiring her greatly; and Japan may like us and appropriate our knowledge,

and trade with us. But Englishman, American, Frenchman, or German is one kind of human being, and Japanese is another. Between them stands, and will stand for ever, the sacred and ineradicable distinction of race. China has, of course, been dimly inspired by this knowledge when she has denounced Japan as a traitor to Asia, and the Chinese community in Hongkong betrays the same feeling when it speaks of the "treachery" of the most enlightened Chinaman there because he possesses a double European education in law and medicine, wears European clothes, and married a European wife. But the retort of Japan is that the real traitor is China, because she has been content to remain the victim of the Occident instead of rousing herself to push back its advancing waves, if an opportunity should offer. And Japan is prepared to bring China back to Asiatic allegiance. It is not yet understood that if Japan's first object during the war has been to vanquish China, her second has been to avoid any step which might upset the Chinese dynasty. Had she wished to do this, nothing could have been easier. She could with almost a certainty of success have left Port Arthur and Wei-hai-wei to stew in their own juice, and have marched an expedition straight to Peking. But putting this supposition aside in deference to the views of some military experts, she could have despatched emissaries to China—and her *soshi* class would have provided numbers of them — to distribute throughout the more disaffected provinces placards calling upon the Chinese people to rise against their alien rulers, and assuring them that the war was only against the throne and not against the country; then, by providing with money and arms the rebels she would thus have created, she could, almost without striking a blow, have brought down the political organisation of China like a house of cards. In that event, however, China would have been a mere inert mass of members, without a head. Japan has no doubt whatever of her ability to re-organise China. The *Hochi Shimbun*, one of the leading Tokyo journals, recently said:—"The Chinese are the worst

governed people in the world, and consequently the easiest to bring under a foreign yoke. Besides, they have no strong national pride, like that entertained by the French, the German, the English, or the Japanese. Talleyrand's saying that 'Italy is a mere geographical name' may be applied to China with much greater force. The Chinese, under the mild and civilised rule of Japan, would soon learn that they fare better thus than under their old masters. That would assuredly be the case in respect of material prosperity, and an improvement in such an important matter would in itself satisfy them." And in a later issue the same journal, which is not in the habit of treating serious matters thoughtlessly, has carried this consideration to the point of advocating it as a measure of practical politics. It declares that China is doomed to destruction, if not by Japan, then by Europe. It is, therefore, a question demanding deep thought whether Japan should not take possession of the big empire in the sequel of the present war. Should China fall a prey to one or more European countries, Japan's position would be greatly endangered. The *Hochi Shimbun* therefore entertains little doubt that it lies in the path of Japan's mission, as the peace-maintainer of the Orient, to bring China under the flag of the Rising Sun at the earliest possible opportunity. And the same confidence on behalf of Japan has been strikingly expressed in England:—

"Consider what a Japan-governed China would be. Think what the Chinese are; think of their powers of silent endurance under suffering and cruelty; think of their frugality; think of their patient perseverance, their slow, dogged persistence, their recklessness of life. Fancy this people ruled by a nation of born organisers, who, half-allied to them, would understand their temperament and their habits. The Oriental, with his power of retaining health under conditions under which no European could live, with his savage daring when roused, with his inborn cunning, lacks only the superior knowledge of civilisation to be the equal of the European in warfare as well as in industry. In England we do not realise that in a Japanese dynasty such a civilisation would exist: we have not yet learned to look upon the Mikado as a civilised monarch, as we look upon the Czar. Yet such he is undoubtedly. And under him the dreams of the supremacy of the Yellow Race in Europe, Asia, and even Africa, to which Dr. Pearson and others have given expression, would be no longer mere nightmares. Instead of speculating as to whether

England or Germany or Russia is to be the next world's ruler, we might have to learn that Japan was on its way to that position." *

Upon this Japanese ambition, however, there can be but one comment: Great Britain and Russia would never permit it. Yet if the Chinese Humpty-Dumpty fell from his wall nobody but Japan could put him together again; no western nation could attempt the task, even if her rivals would allow her to try. If the Emperor Kwang-hsü were hurled from his throne either from within or from without, foreign intervention would take place on the instant, and that is what Japan desires to avoid above all things. Hence her unwillingness to strike at Peking, hence British anxiety, hence the well-meant attempt at mediation, and hence, too, the powerful British fleet at the present moment in Chinese waters.

Japanese statesmen are keenly alive to the foregoing considerations. What is the alternative in their eyes? Obviously and certainly an alliance with a European Power. But with whom? Japan has already chosen in her own mind. She fears Russia; she distrusts France; Germany is not powerful enough at sea to count in this connection, even if her interests were large enough to justify a strong policy in the Far East. The ideal in foreign politics of the most enlightened Japanese is an alliance with Great Britain. In fact, without exaggeration and without the slightest discourtesy to Japan it may be said that her alliance with us is on offer. The commercial interests of the two countries are identical; we both desire the widest markets for our manufactures; cordial friendship reigns between us because we have shown our trust in Japan by making a treaty with her upon equal terms. And what Japan needs in an alliance is power at sea. Upon land in Asia no Asiatic nation can dream of opposing her; nor for the matter of that could any European nation fight her at the present time. But at sea she is weak, and upon the command of the sea, as we are

* *The St. James's Gazette*, Oct. 6, 1894.

slowly learning, national safety depends. Great Britain and Japan allied in the Far East would be irresistible. The one would command the sea, the other would dominate the land: the British Fleet would keep communications open, and nothing could resist the troops of the Emperor. With such a union the Korean Channel would become a second Dardanelles, and the Sea of Japan would become the Russian Black Sea of the East. In return for our alliance Japan would willingly see Great Britain occupy either Wei-hai-wei or Chusan as her northern naval base, and Canton as her opportunity of commercial expansion; Japan taking Formosa and holding Port Arthur. As an ally Japan would be faithful, brave, and powerful; and the Anglo-Japanese alliance would impose peace and offer freedom of trade. It would not, like France, devise every pitiful fiscal expedient to exclude all manufactures except its own protected ones, nor handicap sick and suffering foreigners by a differential hospital tariff.

What are the alternatives to this union of interests? They are two. First, Japan will ally herself with France; or if not with France then with Russia, France regarding the operation with a friendly eye. A Franco-Japanese alliance would doubtless be received in France with acclamation, for it would be aimed directly at Great Britain, and France would get as her share of the bargain the occupation of the Chinese province of Yunnan, and thus the dream of Garnier of opening the markets of Southern China through Tongking would at length be realised. Against France and Japan combined we should be helpless in the Far East, except at the cost of a great war upon which no British statesman would embark. And it would not be long before a Franco-Japanese-Chinese *Zollverein* would close the markets of China to our goods. That would be an end of our influence and our trade in a part of the world where, given a modicum of wisdom and courage, it is our destiny to play a predominant part in the future.

In the second place, if the alliance were between Japan and Russia, France would get almost as much for her share, while the advantages to Russia would be colossal. As I have explained in another chapter, it is Russia that Japan has feared in the past; indeed, I may go further and at the risk of being charged with indiscretion add that the plans of Japan for hostilities with Russia are as complete as they were for her occupation of Korea. For years it has been in the mind of certain Japanese statesmen to propose to China at the fitting opportunity an alliance whose ultimate object should be to drive Russia back from the Far East. The Japanese Staff have in their possession the most detailed plans for the taking of Vladivostok and the cutting off of the wedge of Russian territory which intervenes between Manchuria and the sea. This done, the Japanese would propose to China that Kirin-ula should be made into a great fortress, at the termination of a line of railway, as a base from which to hold Russia for ever in check. This, however, would be a *pis aller* of Japanese politics, and would be dictated alike by anger at England and by fear for the future. Russia has long desired to absorb Manchuria, with its vast potential riches, and to establish herself at Port Arthur. This is well known to those whose business it is to know such things, and it explains the willingness of Russia to promise to take no step in Korea. This is what Russia would gain by an alliance with Japan; France would get something to "keep her sweet," as Orientals say; crippled China would be a mere *corpus* for Japanese trade; Wei-hai-wei, the native city of Shanghai, and Formosa would be Japanese; and with Port Arthur Russian, and Yunnan French, where would England be?

These are not dreams. If they seem so, it is because there has been no rearrangement of the map of Europe on a large scale for so long that we have lost the habit of considering such eventualities. The collapse of China, however, lays the Far East as open to the gambits of international rivalry as a chess-

board when the four files face one another for the game. If they are dreams to-day, any one of them—so far as Japan is concerned—may be a reality to-morrow; and since I regard the situation as one of the utmost gravity for Great Britain, I may perhaps venture to take one step more, and present as a basis for the consideration of those who are better informed or upon whose shoulders the responsibility will rest, my own view of what the action of England should be.

The Anglo-Russian *entente*, by which Lord Rosebery has achieved an undoubted triumph of diplomacy (supposing it to last), is somewhat of a disappointment to Japan, but it leaves the way open for a solution of the Far Eastern question in her interests no less than in those of Russia and ourselves. In all the country north of the southern frontier of China there are virtually only three great interests: those of Great Britain, Russia, and Japan. The object, therefore, of any arrangement should be the combination of these three. In this there should be no serious difficulty, since, in the first place, the interests of the three are fortunately not conflicting; and, second, since the ends aimed at are to the injury of no other party, a moral justification is not lacking, and therefore there need be no hesitation in defying opposition. Let us consider first the case of Japan. By the terms of an Anglo-Russian-Japanese understanding she would receive in the first place the virtual suzerainty of Korea; second, whatever reasonable indemnity she chooses to impose upon China; third, the cession of Formosa; fourth, the Chinese navy, which she may capture. Fifth, there need be no hesitation in allowing her to collect the Customs at the port of Shanghai until the indemnity is paid. And finally, she would have the inestimable advantage of being free from fear of China in the future. Next consider the case of Russia. Her share would be the triangle of territory around which her Siberian Railway is at present planned to run; this would then proceed in a straight line from Verkhne Udinsk or Kiakhta to its terminus on the coast, across a district

probably more capable of development and possessing greater natural wealth than any other part of the Far East. Second, she would of course have to be provided with a winter port at the terminus of her railway, and to this it would be necessary for Japan to consent. No great concession, however, would be here involved, since, as I have said elsewhere, it is utterly out of the question to suppose that when her railway is finished Russia will stop short at a port frozen for five months in the year, whatever may be the cost of procuring a better. Third, Russia would be freed for ever from the fear of China along the three thousand miles of her weak and hardly defensible frontier. Finally, what would be the position of Great Britain under this arrangement? First, she would secure her indispensable northern naval base at Chusan, Wei-hai-wei, or elsewhere. Second, the vast markets of the whole of China would be thrown open to the whole world, and she would have her customary predominance in them. Third, she would be allowed to construct a railway from British Kowloon to Hongkong, and the development of the province of Kwangtung and the city of Canton would be placed under her charge. Fourth, the Government of India would be given a free hand in Thibet. Fifth, all anxieties—and they are many and heavy—with regard to her future in the Far East would be happily removed. To an arrangement of this kind the powerful sympathy of the United States would hardly be wanting.

This is a moment for courageous and far-seeing statesmanship, a moment to admit frankly the existence of our bitter enemies, and a moment, therefore, to seek for ourselves interested friends. France in the Far East will always be our opponent. Whatever we propose at the present time—this is neither a supposition nor a secret—Germany will oppose. It is therefore the imperative duty of our statesmen to seek an alliance elsewhere on fair terms. Moreover, this is our last opportunity in that part of the world. If not we, then with absolute certainty it will be others and our enemies who will

profit. Once more, at the risk of wearying the reader, let me beg him not to forget that we already have the right which comes to us from possessing beyond all comparison the predominance of trade and foreign population in the Far East, and that whatever territory comes under our influence we throw open freely to all the world. The ball of a great opportunity is at our feet. *Aegre offertur, facile amittitur.* I am well aware that at the present moment the ideal of our Foreign Office in the Far East as elsewhere is the old-fashioned one that has often served us so well before—the maintenance of the *status quo.* But a *status quo* maintained by England and Russia, with a victorious and foiled Japan outside it, presents to my mind the aspect of a slumbering volcano.

SIAM.

CHAPTER XXVI.

BANGKOK AND ITS PEOPLE.

WHEN the present Tsar of Russia visited Siam in 1891, he was met outside the bar of the Bangkok River by a large European-built Siamese man-of-war with heavy guns, and was conveyed to the Royal Palace in a Siamese State Barge of Oriental magnificence, a hundred feet long, with eighty gilded paddles and gorgeous decorations. His amazement, for he had expected to find a land of jungle and peasant, fitly represents not only the ignorance of the world about Siam and her resources, but also the ease with which the realities of her condition have always been concealed by the speciousness of her outward display.

The ordinary traveller will also obtain at the very mouth of the river his first insight (as he will imagine it to be) into the reality of Siamese progress from her ancient characteristics of a tropical jungle and a down-trodden people. For whether you approach from Singapore or from Hongkong, your first vision of this land of the paradoxical and the bizarre is a wide river-mouth edged apparently with endless swamp and fringed with miles of waving and impenetrable attap palms, sending forth swarms of vigorous mosquitoes to repel the intrusive foreigner. But at the true entrance of the river you discover two large forts, containing the latest developments of harbour defence—big guns, disappearing carriages, and masked batteries. And this strange contrast, this shock of false relationships, this mingling of west and east—the one real, interesting, and

living, the other sham, pretentious, and dead—constantly faces you in Siam.

The bar of the Bangkok River is an exceedingly difficult obstacle; the channel itself is so constantly shifting, the workings of the tide in this narrowing end of the great funnel of the Gulf of Siam are so perplexingly intricate, and the effects of the variations of wind upon the tides are so great, that a very intimate and constant familiarity with the river will alone enable any vessel to enter. The sagacious Foreign Minister of the Siamese Government, Prince Devawongse Varoprakar, once replied to an Englishman who asked why the removal of the bar was never included among his projects of reform, "Perhaps for the same reason that you do not welcome the proposal for a Channel Tunnel." The French gunboats, when forcing their entrance to the Menam in July, 1893, were fully alive to this difficulty, and though the Siamese Government had cut off the supply of pilots from foreign men-of-war by proclamation, they cleverly secured the services of the best of the Bangkok pilots by making their entrance close upon the heels of a vessel trading under the French flag. Even at high tide, it is only possible for ships drawing twelve or thirteen feet to get over the bar; the cargoes of the large trading vessels being brought outside to them in sailing lighters and Chinese junks.

As you pass into the actual river, there gradually comes into view one of the most striking pictures of this eastern wonderland—a little island lying midway in the broad expanse of stream, bearing upon its scanty head a pinnacle of glistening white, a lofty Buddhist pagoda with attendant cloisters, shrines, and chapels, with roofs of many-tinted tiles. It is an idyllic picture, a fitting adytum to the shrine of truest Buddhism—Siam, the land of monasteries, the loyal guardian of the Faith at its purest, the scene of its return to the more rationalistic, and, in fact, originally simple elements. On your right, upon the low-lying eastern bank appears the village of Paknam, "the mouth of the waters," whose portly governor, Phya Samudh,

BANGKOK : "THE VENICE OF THE EAST."

was certainly one of the most remarkable of my many eastern acquaintances; the holder of one of the highest ranks of Siamese nobility and officialdom; a man of mixed but chiefly Chinese origin; at the age of ten boot-black to a British mariner; at fifty, confidant, factotum, and counsellor to the Royal Prince-Ministers of Siam; owner of four wealthy rice-mills; the official cicerone and entertainer of most foreign visitors to Siam; speaking with equal ease and native force, English, Siamese, Malay, and various dialects of Chinese.

A single railway runs now from Paknam to the capital, sixteen miles by land. This line saves some three hours of time, as against the tortuous windings of the Menam, and affords a striking panorama of the wide plantations, the rich gardens, the muddy paddy-fields, and the humble peasant-life which make up the real Siam that the hasty traveller so seldom sees behind the shifting scenes of politics and progress in the capital. But the water-way is the true highway in this land of canals; and as the ship breasts the current of the river in the early morning, you may look upon the awakening of Siamese daily life in all its primitive simplicity. The yellow-robed priest, just risen from his early orisons, passes in his slight canoe from door to door upon the riverside, to gather the daily offerings of rice and food in the iron alms-bowl of the Buddhist mendicant. The chattering women, with their large wicker sun-hats, standing to their oars in gondola fashion, with stalwart strokes urge along their laden boats of fruit and betel to the floating markets. The ubiquitous Chinaman paddles his tiny dug-out, filled with much-loved greasy pork. The children play in the water, or swim recklessly in the wash of the big "fire-boat." The father munches his early rice and fish on the floor of one of the quaint floating houses, with pointed roofs of thatch, built upon shaky rafts of bamboo, that line the banks of the river in endless rows, and form perhaps the most distinctly characteristic feature of this novel scene. And the heavy junk-rigged lighters sail down, with their gesticulating Celestial crews, carrying the cargoes

of rice or teak to the traders in the Roads at Ko-si-chang, the island anchorage and health resort some sixty miles away.

On dropping anchor in mid-stream at this strange town of Bangkok, one realises at once that it is to trade, and trade alone, that Siam has owed, and must ever owe, her chance of figuring among the people of the East. To the silent palm-groves and virgin jungles of 1850, have succeeded to-day the forest of masts, the towering chimneys, and the humming "godowns" of the pressing British trader. Rice-mills and saw-mills, docks and ship-yards, stores and banks, houses and schools, alike display the energy of the Anglo-Saxon, hand in hand with the industry of the Mongol, forcing new life into native indolence.

On arriving at the Merchants' Wharf or the Hotel Quay, or when looking up one's acquaintances in the busy town, one's first question is, Where is Siam? where are the Siamese? Everywhere are Chinamen, or Malays, or Indians. Do the Siamese have no part in all this scene of activity and commerce? A very small share. In one's wanderings one sees at first but little of Siam and the Siamese. Indeed the "down-town" *farang*—the Siamese word for every foreigner—though full of rumours, gossip, stories, and his own ideas about the Siamese and their ways, the Palace and its intrigues, the princes and their policy, knows practically nothing about the real Siam, almost completely shut off, as he is, from observation of its primary elements, and misled as to the intricacies of its internal condition and prospects. That this is indeed the case is never for a moment lost sight of by the wily Siamese themselves; and it is with many a smile that they watch the futile efforts of the foreign element to follow the workings of the native mind. But they receive blandly the advice and suggestions of foreign Consuls, as the latter endeavour to apprehend the apparent directions of eastern methods in general and of Siamese plans in particular, from the impossible standpoint of western criticism and European aims. And when it is remembered that the

Foreign Legations, the Ministers and Consuls of foreign nations, are all situated in the midst of this atmosphere of ignorance and misconception, commonly called "down town," and that with the exception of the French Consular officials (who use special means for getting information from behind the scenes) they see nothing whatever of the inside life of Siam, nor ever gain the confidence of her Princes, it will be easily understood how difficult it has been for the Foreign Offices of Europe to be alive to the realities of the situation from time to time, or to foresee and to forestall the sudden developments, whether of diplomacy or mere intrigue, that work such effective changes under an Oriental government.

In the solar system of Siam, the Palace is the sun. "Up town," when the Palace awakes, everything awakes; when the Palace sleeps, everything sleeps—officialdom, politics, work, duties, pleasures. Whereas, whatever happens in the Palace, whatever intrigues take place, whether French threatenings are being resisted in the Cabinet, British Consuls hoodwinked in the Foreign Office, or German Concessionaries browbeaten in the bureau; though cruelties are being perpetrated in the gaols, or exactions plotted in the Ministries; though unspeakable blunders are committed in the Departments, and the whole administrative machine seems going to pieces,—"down town" life and its commerce go on the same. The foreign element is, in fact, completely outside the real life of Siam, and this although it is solely due to foreign pressure that Siam has become what she is, and that the Palace has any policy to devise or resources to expropriate. To the Palace, therefore, one must speedily find one's way, to see things as they are, or in any sense to know Siam. I shifted my quarters to the city proper within twenty-four hours of my arrival, and for nearly three months I lived in the very centre of it, within a stone's throw of the Palace wall. To the opportunity of doing this I owe whatever intimate knowledge of Siam I possess.

As you drive through the one main street to the city wall you

see many of the worst aspects of Siamese town life—the pawnshops and brothels, the spirit-dens and gambling-houses, the reeking alleys and the heaps of refuse, the leprous beggars and the lounging peons. The old wall of a hundred years ago still surrounds the older city. You pass through it halfway between the foreign quarter and the Palace. Its lofty gateways, however, are never shut or guarded, and indeed the gates are almost too rusty to be closed. The Siamese have little reverence for the antique, and invariably prefer convenience to sentiment; so openings are freely cut, battlements removed, and towers destroyed, whether for admitting a road into some prince's property or for erecting electric installations for the Palace. As soon as you have passed the gateway and entered the city proper, you begin to realise the effective presence of the Siamese Government and to feel the pervading influence of royalty. The broad and well-kept road, the rows of new-built houses and rapidly-spreading shops, with the stuccoed walls of palaces and prisons, of barracks and offices, display the Hausmann-like changes that King Chulalongkorn I. has effected in the outward appearance of his capital, during the twenty-five years that have elapsed since first he wore the crown as a lad of fifteen.

Most of the princes, the two dozen brothers and half-brothers of the King, who practically control all the executive and administrative departments of State, inhabit large houses, built for them, usually at the King's expense, in foreign style. But the Royal Palace itself has been cleverly contrived by an English architect in collaboration with Siamese artificers to combine Oriental picturesqueness and pinnacles with European comfort and solidity. The lofty and graceful pointed spires of the Grand Halls of Audience are conspicuous from a long way off; and the gleaming tiles of the golden Pagoda and the many coloured roofs of the Royal Temple within the Palace walls give a richer effect than anything to be found east of Calcutta.

The arrangement of the Palace and its buildings is an em-

THE HALLS OF AUDIENCE, BANGKOK.

bodiment in brick of the policy of King Chulalongkorn's reign—which has been to draw the power, and consequently the wealth, from the hands of the once great nobles and old family dignitaries, and to concentrate it in himself alone; to delegate it to members of his own intimate family circle, and to them only, and this not permanently but provisionally, at his own sovereign will and changing pleasure. By this means he has attained the very quintessence of centralisation, and realised in the completest sense a State in which the King is *de facto* as well as *de jure* the sole source and repository of power.

Round the Palace buildings proper, enclosed by lofty walls and solid gateways guarded by day and closed at night, are grouped almost all the offices of the various Government departments. And right in the heart and centre of this charmed circle of officialdom is the Royal Grand Palace, of which the audience halls and State apartments form the outer and only visible portion. The inner portion of the Palace—the real dwelling-place of his Majesty—is entirely concealed behind these. It is invisible from any point on the north, south and east, and entirely shielded on the river side by cleverly arranged walls and courts which effect their purpose without suggesting their object. The King is the only man within this seething city of humanity; alone—if ever a man were alone—amidst a crowded population of none but women and children; a complete female town with its houses, markets, streets, prisons, and courts. This city of women is known among the Siamese as *Kang Nai*, "The Inside," and etiquette even forbids any allusion to it. Here the King lives his life, and has deliberately elected (for it is by no means a necessary custom) to spend the greater part of his time; his excursions "outside" amidst life and male humanity, once frequent and enjoyed, have gradually decreased, till in the last five years he has seldom exceeded an hour of formal audience daily, and during the past twelve months he has not averaged an hour in a fortnight. This seclusion of the King, even in its milder form of five or six years ago, must

always be borne in mind as helping to explain many of the strange inconsistencies of Siamese policy, both foreign and domestic, especially when it is taken in conjunction with the influence which naturally falls into the hands of the women by whom his Majesty is perpetually surrounded. But that, in the now classic phrase, is another story, upon which it is best not to dwell, though there are volumes to be written about it.

To find picturesque Bangkok, one must look elsewhere than in the Palace, for there one sees merely the effect of money spent in the tasteless purchase of European extravagances, so that the result, though somewhat grand in general effect, only serves to heighten the squalor and disorder that prevail in every corner. On ordinary days, when the King is not expected to come out, and no foreign representatives are to have audience, the sentries of the Palace Guard usually sit about on rickety chairs at the grand gateways; the officials of the Household lie about in all descriptions of undress in the stone courtyards; and gigantic chandeliers of countless German-made duplex lamps burn all day until they go out from want of oil, in the lack of any regular hands to perform the simplest household routine—that word so entirely hateful to the average Siamese.

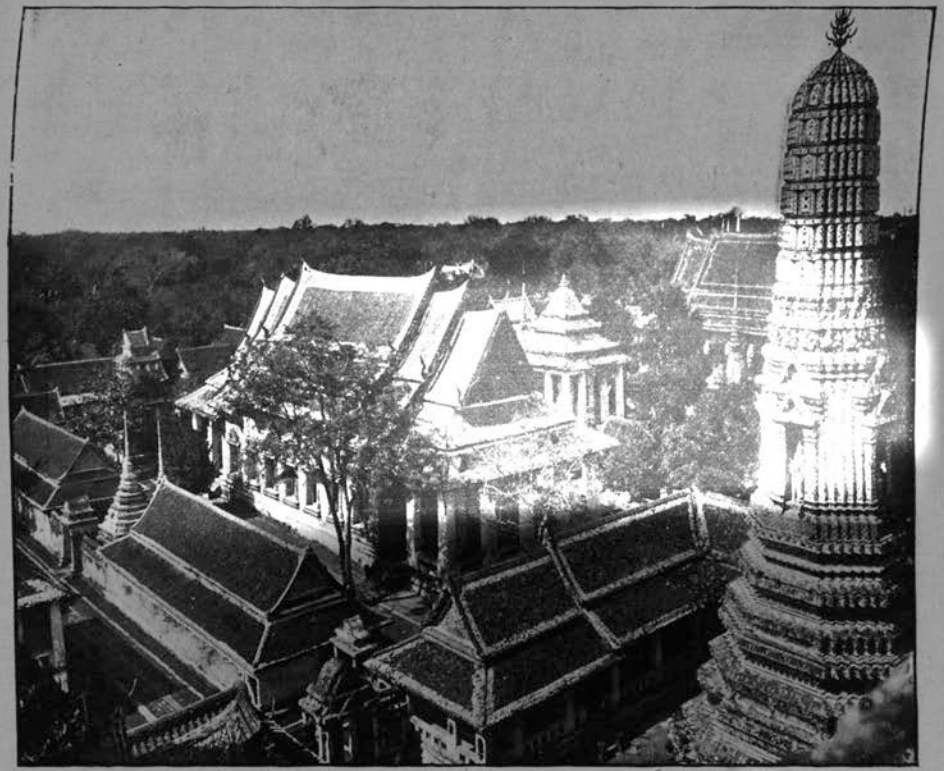
Every visit that I paid to the Royal Siamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs was an Oriental object-lesson. A lazy sentry lolling on an old oil-tin at the outer gate would insolently ask my errand, and lazily give a reluctant guttural assent to my doubting ingress. Another sentry, if my visit was late—as it generally was, for the Foreign Minister usually began his work at eleven o'clock at night—lying asleep within the entry, would sulkily respond to my shouts of inquiry with a hardly intelligible reply in colloquial Siamese that the Prince was in or was out,—*yu* or *mai yu*—as might suit his own particular humour, without any needless reference to the truth of the matter. As I thus necessarily carried on my own hesitating researches unheralded into the inner regions, my ears were met with the snores of attendants lying about the passages, or the

yawns of sleepy clerks kept there the whole night in idleness; till at length one might come suddenly upon the Royal Prince Minister himself, at supper with some favoured gossip, or intent upon a vigorous and exciting game of chess, an occupation at which he is *facile princeps*, as in most of the other games of skill that his Royal Highness affects, and on which he spends a very considerable portion of his "office hours." In the meantime suitors might wail, and Consuls rave at the needless delays, the perpetual procrastinations, which often continued from week to week and even from month to month; and usually wearied out, as they were intended to do, the unfortunate foreigners. Go where one would, and when one would, in this strange medley of departments, bureaus, and government offices, every passage and every room was all unswept and littered with the daily mess, the cast-off cigarettes, the decaying betel-nut, and all the indescribable *débris* of the countless hangers-on and ragged retainers who attend the footsteps of every official. In not a single office but that of Prince Damrong—a brilliant exception to the general slovenliness of Siamese ministers in this, as in many respects—did I observe the slightest desire for neatness and order, or even an idea of common cleanliness. One naturally expects great things, for instance, of the far-famed White Elephants that live at the gates of the royal palace, to whom fable and a credulous European public have attributed an absurd sanctity. But they are in reality in a plight that would shame the bear-cage of a wandering circus; tended by slouching ruffians who lie about in rags and tatters, eking out a scanty livelihood by weaving baskets, and begging a copper from every visitor in return for throwing a bunch of seedy grass or rotting bananas to the swaying beasts which raise their trunks in anticipation of the much-needed addition to their scanty diet. Such is the Palace of the wealthy and progressive King of Siam.

When one thinks of the swarms of women and children that spend their whole lives "inside," and the innumerable officials and hangers-on that throng the "outside" of this wondrous

palace, when one realises that it boasts of no drains except a simple trench that was dug for surplus rain floods, but which has unfortunately been made to slope the wrong way and so collects the flood-water into three-feet pools at the very gateway itself, while every domestic or sanitary arrangement is conspicuous by its entire absence, and is supplied, as one's senses inform one, by nature's means alone,—one begins to wonder indeed at the prolonged exemption from epidemics that seems to have favoured the happy-go-lucky Siamese. But on gala days, and above all when any *farang* visitor is to be dazzled, they set to work strenuously, and soon with hasty brooms, scurrying officials, weary prisoners, half-paid coolies, and many lashes, a general effect is produced, striking in its mass of colour, effective in its architectural pose, and brilliant in its Oriental profusion of "humanity in procession."

Back from the busy parts of the city, Bangkok is intersected by pleasant bye-paths and the winding canals all overhung with tropical verdure; so much so that the whole city, when surveyed from the height of the "Great Golden Mountain" —an artificial brick pagoda some two hundred feet high— appears, as my photograph shows, to be one mass of trees dotted with occasional protruding spires. To turn off into the first side-path and enter the compound of some petty official, is to penetrate at a step into the patriarchal state. Around you stand the wooden houses, erect on piles to raise them above the mud, or even water, which is always present during the rainy season; reached by simple ladders, sufficient for man but impossible for beast. The women are pounding in the mortars with heavy wooden hammers beneath the floors of the houses, or winnowing the brown-skinned paddy in great wicker pans, in the middle of the courtyard. Pariah dogs are prowling round, snarling and howling over the refuse of many weeks of primitive Siamese housekeeping. In the centre dwelling sits the master, full in the open doorway, and whether he is making his toilet, or eating his dinner, or performing his duties, he is



WAT CHANG, BANGKOK, FROM A PINNACLE.

always surrounded with servants and visitors, wives and mothers, in unconcerned proximity; for Siam is a land where privacy is unknown and a desire for it unfelt. In the adjoining dwellings, upon the same platforms, are the households of his various sons and their wives, or more often of his daughters and their husbands; for in Siam a young man goes to live in his mother-in-law's compound without any misgiving.

But it is in the "Wats"—the temples, or monasteries, as they should rather be called—that we discover the really finer parts of Bangkok. These buildings occupy the best sites, and afford the most beautiful views of the town. Built for the most part in the days when roads and carriages were unknown, they nestle among the trees upon the banks of the innumerable canals. Amidst shady cloisters, frescoed in brilliant colours with the fabled incidents of Brahmin polytheism, and glaring with the hell-pictures of later Buddhist mythology, stands the Temple itself, lofty, cool, and dim, with threefold or fourfold roofs and soaring rafters and marble floors, where dreamy monks recite in impressive sing-song the lengthy formulæ of their world-old faith, while placid Buddhas tower above them in endless calm, or stretch their length in huge figures of sixty or seventy feet of gilded brickwork, through the gloomy columns.

Around and outside these more sacred precincts stand rows on rows of little dwellings for the priests, where day by day they practise their orisons or instruct their pupils, or pursue their meditations. But it is on festival days, and on the weekly Sacred Day, the seventh and fifteenth of each moon, that these Wats become the scene of activity and resound with the hum of many voices. In Siam, as elsewhere, the active ministrations of religion seem chiefly sought by the softer sex, perhaps with more reason than in Europe, since here the men will work off each his own necessary portion of religion in the few weeks or months, or occasionally years, that almost every Siamese man spends in the monastic order, at some period of

his life. Thus on "Wan Pra" may be seen a crowd of women with laughing children coming in all simplicity, like mediæval Christians to the weekly Mass, to gain their humble share of hard-won "merit" by devotion, and if possible to escape the eternal handicap which Buddhism lays upon their sex.

The only official call that a Siamese makes upon the rites of the church is at his cremation, the greatest event in his career. It is a genuinely impressive experience to see the humble ceremonies of a peasant cremation, to hear the yellow-robed priests intoning with Gregorian sonorousness the office of the dead over the leaping flames, and to watch them as they repeat the orisons from hour to hour throughout the night over the smouldering ashes, with weird cadence, in the strange rolling accents of the old Pali, till at dawn they make their mournful search upon the pyre for the charred remnants of frail humanity.

The cremation of the rich and great is a different affair altogether. At the death of a noble, and still more of some member of the Royal Family, a cremation, which is then held some months afterwards, becomes a public holiday, a brilliant gala week with dances and shows and theatres and every form of national amusement and delight; and so adds one more to the wonderful list of high-days and holidays which the ease-loving Siamese contrives to fit into his year. Festivals are indeed the chief business of Siamese life. I was a spectator of one specially gorgeous festival in the king's summer palace up the river at Bang-pa-in. It was a right royal pageant in honour of the yearly *fête* of *Loi Katong*, a sort of Feast of Lanterns, when every stream and waterway sparkled with the little lamps and tapers set afloat by the simple worshipper, to "make merit," in happy ignorance that he thus perpetuated the primeval invocation of his Aryan forefathers to the bounty of the waters which alone can give the rich harvest. In tiny cockle-shells and stately barges, in fragile emblems and in towering monsters, the glinting line of lights was borne along,

amidst the blare of trumpets and the shouts of the throng, till it disappeared into the darkness, and left the light-hearted Siamese to count up the days to the next of those recurring holidays.

It is only during the vast preparations for some Palace function—a gorgeous cremation, the brilliant ceremony of the "top-knot cutting" when the Crown Prince comes of age, or the annual visits to the Wats—that one first perceives that the indolent Siamese *can* work, and work with a will, too, to build up towering erections of bamboo and thatch and tinsel and gaudy colouring of waving festoons, with an activity and ingenuity that pass one's comprehension, till one happens upon the explanation. It is that the great officials and even the royal princes are themselves directing and urging on with voice and hand the work of raising these ephemeral shows, which appeal at once to their keenest sense of pleasure and their fondest hopes for royal favour. It has been well said that the Siamese habit is to work at play, and to play at work; I shall have something to say upon the latter head later on, but the subject of cremations offers one of the finest examples of the former. There is a fine square of open and level greensward just in front of the Grand Palace, covering some four or five acres. On the death of any child or near relative of the reigning or previous monarch, this ground is covered with an immense erection of buildings, which occupy often five or six months and tens of thousands of hands in building, and are on view during perhaps five or six days of the ceremony, and in actual use only during the five or six hours of the burning. They are then entirely demolished within a few days, and the whole process is begun over again with entirely new material at the next royal death. The expense involved each time is almost incredible. If we include the accompanying lavish distribution of presents, both of Siamese money and of goods ordered from Europe by hundreds of cases, it sometimes amounts to as much as fifteen thousand catties—say, £75,000. And

this in a country where the peasant is taxed nearly fifty per cent. on every article of necessity; where official salaries are generally in arrear; while defence, education, public works, and other reforms, are always starved on the plea of lack of revenue.

But to see a Royal Siamese Ceremony at its best, one must witness the pageants connected with the varied innumerable sacrosanct events in the life of the Heir Apparent himself, or indeed of any other of the full Celestial princes—*Chow Fah*, as they are called—*i.e.*, those sons of the King whose mothers are of royal blood. There is first the giving of presents to the royal parents at his birth—a list of the money value of each, with the donor's name, being carefully registered as a guide for future royal favours. Then there is the top-knot cutting at the age of twelve, followed by his entrance into the noviciate of the Buddhist monastic order at thirteen, and into the full priesthood at twenty-one; besides the minor *fêtes* at marriages or the bestowals of higher ranks and titles; and above all, the final festival of his cremation. Every one of these events is the occasion for immense processions and gorgeous pageants, entailing a complete cessation of all Government business for a week or ten days at least, and its confusion and delay for a much longer period before and after. To crown all, there is the expense involved in the dresses, the lavish *largesses*, and the almsgiving, besides the heavy penalty of the forced and unpaid labour of most of the unfortunate workmen employed. So that each one of the little "sons of heaven"—whose number is now rising seven, as the present King began his family rather early in life (at thirteen he was the father of two children)—has been estimated to cost his faithful and long-suffering country from ninety to a hundred thousand pounds *in festivals alone*. Nobles and princes, by the way, pay nothing towards taxes. I should add that any lack of the necessary total sum is made up through "loyal contributions," consisting of "voluntary" abatements of the monthly salaries of the officials, since it is

A Temple on a Canal, Bangkok.

an absolute necessity that the full requirements be forthcoming for these royal and national amusements.

In a people so averse to work of any kind, one would expect to find but few popular amusements, and those not of the nature of violent exercise. And this is the case. There are practically but two forms of amusement throughout the whole of Siam—gambling and the theatre. The former is the great national passion; every large town has its nightly lottery of incredible proportions. The possession of the Bangkok Lottery license brings a great fortune in about five years, and the Government draws one of its largest revenues from this source. Gambling-houses, and their natural concomitants and next-door neighbours the pawn-shops, are as numerous in Bangkok as public-houses in London, and fifty times as pernicious in their effect on the people; and this deadly national trait can but increase so long as a native government prefers to use it as a source of profit rather than to check it as a national curse.

Of theatres and theatre-going a volume might be written. To an ordinary Siamese it is the height of happiness to sit jammed in a dense crowd on the floor, from seven p.m. to two a.m., watching the same play—or rather portion of a play, for it is a matter of several such nights in succession before the drama is completed. The plays are usually adaptations from old Hindu mythology; the plot and every incident of it are familiar to all in the audience—the more so, the better. The attraction consists in the manner of its presentment, the long-drawn tension of the "love" episodes, the realism of the *dénoûments*, the gorgeousness of the dresses, and the minute skill of the numerous dances. The actors, with the exception of a few clowns, are all young girls. They are subjected to stringent training from the age of four years, and in their prime at seventeen and eighteen years of age are a possession of immense money value to their "owners," in spite of the much-vaunted but unenforced slavery reforms of the present reign. The dances are entirely posture-dances, great pleasure being taken in the abnormal

bending-back of elbows, wrists, ankles, and finger-joints, which is carried to an extent that would be impossible to even a "double-jointed" European. The dances are accompanied by loud music from the orchestra, assisted sometimes by the hard voices of a chorus of some twenty old women, and heightened in the impassioned moments by the voices of the *danseuses* themselves. I was permitted to take the accompanying photograph of two of the leading *prime donne* of Bangkok, in a company belonging to a most distinguished nobleman, a personal friend of the King, whose theatrical performances are always the most popular feature of all the great national and other holidays, the spectators numbering many hundreds at a time. There is nothing to pay at a Siamese theatre, for the owner is recouped by special donations from wealthy patrons, proportionate to the popularity and success of the performances, while the "company," like most other native employees in this strange land, alike in palace and cottage, are not wage-earners but house-chattels, that is, domestic slaves.

The fascinating subject of Siamese ceremonies, which, as I have said, comprise three-fourths of the whole interest of life to a Bangkok Siamese, has led me away from my description of Bangkok itself. Its plan as a town, however, is so simple that a few words will suffice. It is situated at about twelve miles distance from the sea in a direct line, sixteen by rail, and some thirty by water, and lies right on the banks of the really fine river which has called it into being, to wit, the Menam Chow Phya. Menam, "the mother of waters," is the generic name for all rivers, and "Chow Phya" is the highest title of nobility, the Lord Duke, as it were. The city itself possesses a lengthy official name, couched as are all Siamese titles in the ancient Pali language of the Buddhist Scriptures, the first portion of it meaning "the City of the Great White Angels." Grandiloquent titles, by the way, are a strong point in Siam both for places and for officials, an arrangement which one might almost regard as a striking instance of compensation, since the

importance of the places is usually particularly small, and the duties of the nobles are chiefly conspicuous by their absence. I make this explanation in passing, because otherwise the seventeen-syllabled name of the Palace cook, and the even longer one of the King's barber, might possibly mislead an innocent foreigner into ascribing a wholly fictitious excellence to the cuisine of the one or the dexterity of the other.

The city is practically confined to the left bank of the river; the portion on the right bank which fifty years ago was the centre of power and activity as the abode of the great Regent and his immense and once influential family, has now fallen into complete decay, and is purposely left in neglect, as it might otherwise recall a strong *régime* that is gone, and suggest some unwelcome and uneasy memories of things that the present reigning House may well wish buried in the past.

There is one main road some five or six miles long in excellent condition in its upper portion (that is, where it may have to face the criticism of Majesty itself), which runs parallel with the river and leads from "down town" right up to and through the city proper. The streets of Bangkok will agreeably astonish the visitor from Canton or Peking by their width, their condition, and comparative cleanliness; while the excellent state of the many cross-roads also in the city, such at least as are near the Palace, speak well for the efforts made by the Government during the past ten years in this direction. These owe their existence to the energy of the various European employees of the Siamese Public Works Department. There is, of course, the typical Eastern conglomeration of filth and humanity in hovels and alleys and fetid bazaars; but to see it one must deliberately seek it and leave the ordinary roads of traffic, for it is practically confined to the one long gruesome stretch of Chinese bazaars and native dens of various sorts, of evil odours and still worse repute, known as Sampeng. But even this plague-centre has now been cut into and ventilated by several wide transverse roads, in consequence of the fortunate recurrence recently of

some fires which destroyed hundreds of the close-packed shanties.

Along the whole length of the main road runs a well-kept electric tramway, invariably filled to overflowing with chattering passengers of every description, and paying to its lucky shareholders the respectable dividend of thirty-four per cent. per annum. It was started some five years ago, and was in a sense the precursor of a great wave of native speculation. The fortunate Concessionary was a Dane named M. de Richelieu, who has been for many years in the more or less confidential service of the King of Siam. The tramway was so great a success pecuniarily that it served as an admirable object-lesson in the elementary principles of the investment of money to this simple people, who had previously hoarded their moneys in bags, or invested it in nothing better than slaves for the household or buffaloes for the farm. This gave the first start to an eagerness amongst all the natives to put their money to reproductive uses, which fact explains, amongst other things, the uprising of the rows upon rows of fairly good and neat-looking brick houses that line the main roads of Bangkok, almost from end to end.

The Legations and all the principal residences of Bangkok have their landings on the river front, while the more fortunate ones possess in addition a good entrance on the main road. This is also true of the Grand Palace, of which the Royal Landing is one of the most conspicuous and peculiar features on the river, fronted as it is with meagre battlements and mangy guard-houses and enormous refuse-heaps, but backed by the beautiful spires and glittering pinnacles I have already described. Directly opposite the Palace landing, on the west side of the river, is the Naval Arsenal, the one decently-kept and good-looking government department of Siam—the outcome also of the efforts of the Danish Commodore de Richelieu. Here are the headquarters of a large department of marines, which may be said to monopolise all that can be credited to the account of discipline and order in the government departments of Siam.

A Love-Scene on the Siamese Stage

As an arsenal, its equipment can hardly be called excessive; to us it might even seem a trifle inadequate, since its chief "properties" (no other word is so suitable) are a few turning-lathes, a blacksmith's shop, some Chinese boiler-makers and fitters, some native carpenters, with a few half-paid coolies and ragged prisoners in chains. I must not omit to mention the cartridge-making machinery without materials, the gun-fittings without guns, and the cannons without projectiles. The arsenal does indeed possess one large European-built dry-dock, made two or three years ago, which, after remaining for years unfinished, so long as it had been required only for ordinary government purposes, was at last completed hurriedly so soon as it became "necessary" (in the Palace sense) for the special purpose of accommodating the King's own new yacht. This latter is a vessel of two thousand five hundred tons, with velvet couches, cushioned anterooms, and innumerable ladies' bedrooms, combined with a steel deck, a ram, and an armament of quick-firing guns. The latter might have produced some telling effects upon the French gunboats last year if only there had been one single Siamese engineer who knew how to work the engines to bring the vessel into action, or a single gunner who understood how to fire her guns when she got there. These, however, were details which had unfortunately been overlooked when the Siamese Government with farcical dignity sent their curt intimation to the French Legation that "all necessary instructions" "have been given to our naval and military authorities" to prevent the French entrance.

I must make it clear, however, that Bangkok is not Siam. To see Bangkok superficially in tourist fashion without ever penetrating beneath the thin veneer of recently-acquired western tricks and manners is, of course, misleading to an indescribable degree, while even a close and intimate acquaintance with Bangkok and its life and people, will give but a deceptive and inaccurate conception of what Siam really is, either actually or potentially.

Bangkok is a town with about the population of Newcastle, and the size of Oxford, but Siam is a country with the population of Switzerland and the size of Great Britain and Ireland, Holland, Belgium, and Italy, all rolled into one. Neither a traveller nor a politician can hope to take the measure of a country like this by observing, however carefully, a hybrid development that has arisen in one small corner of it under the special circumstances of European contact and proximity to the sea; more especially when it is remembered that the distant portions of the kingdom are very slightly under the control of the central Government, so far as direct action is concerned, in spite of the recent strenuous efforts towards centralisation.

The solution of the most pressing problems of Siam's future is, of course, means of communication. So long as this one and only remedy is untouched by any efforts except the present perfunctory and fictitious designs of the Royal Railway Department, so long the vast possibilities of Siamese development must remain unrealised. Take about half an hour's walk from the Grand Palace in Bangkok in any direction you please, and you find you can go no further. Not, however, because the roads are atrocious, as in Korea, or impassable, as in China. They simply do not exist—there are none. Even the great waterway, the one hope and stay of the struggling timber-dealers and despairing rice-traders, is allowed to remain in a more or less unnavigable condition for half of every year. The trade of Siam, the development of Siam, the resources of Siam, have become what they are in the teeth of almost insuperable obstacles. In this complete absence of roads, one can of course only get out of Bangkok and see anything of the country by boat-travelling either on the canals or the main river; and afterwards start from certain recognised centres, on ponies or more often on foot, with bullocks or coolies for baggage, along the rough trails and jungle paths, created simply by the persistent tramping of feet, without artificial construction of any sort, which still do duty for "Internal Communications."

The chief places that repay a journey towards the west are Khanburi and Ratburi, which have both been important districts in the past, and with better communications would again become centres for cattle-breeding, sugar cultivation, paddy-growing, and tin-making. To reach them one must take a long journey by a once magnificent canal which now runs dry at low tide, to the Tachin River, and through another to the Meklong River, both of these rivers running parallel with the Menam into the Gulf of Siam.

The great town in the north is Chiengmai (Zimme), where there is a large population of British subjects, mostly Burmans, and consequently a British Consul, whose time is well occupied with the intricate cases that constantly arise out of the confusion of Siamese forest regulations. To reach Chiengmai means a tedious journey in native boats of some sixteen to fifty days, according to the season of the year, part of it over dangerous rapids, where one may often spend a day in making fifty yards.

To the east is the important trade centre and once royal city of Khorat, the objective of the one hundred and sixty miles of railway which is still supposed to be in active process of construction by the Royal Department of Siamese State Railways. The present method of getting there is by the "Great Trail," a worn track, trampled into huge ridges by the feet of pack-bullocks, through virgin jungle and the fever-haunted forest of the "Lord of Fire"—*Phya fai*—and over a steep pass like the sides of a ruined pyramid, some three thousand feet above sea level. The journey involves toiling on foot through waist-deep seas of mud and over various unbridged streams, except during about three months in the height of the dry season, when travelling becomes still more difficult through lack of water. Yet Khorat is the centre of a vast plain of magnificent soil, reaching right away to the Mekong, and capable, if properly developed, of nearly doubling the present revenues of Siam.

Chantabun, the place that is doubtless now best known to fame, is a long distance to the south-east, and is approached by

a journey of about twelve hours across the corner of the Gulf of Siam to the entrance of the Chantabun River (at present under French occupation and guarded by French guns), where the native boats will take you in about six hours up to the town itself. Here is the great emporium for the gem mines of the rich provinces of the *Hinterland*, as also of the pepper and coffee which count amongst the finest productions of Siam, though still undeveloped. Chantabun is the outlet also of the three rich provinces, between the Menam and the Great Cambodian Lake, on which France has long been casting covetous eyes, and over which her influence is daily increasing.

Every one who has been in Singapore or Hongkong, has seen or heard of the quaint bullet-shaped *ticals* that once formed the silver currency of Siam. These coins were originally about two shillings in value, but they are now sharing the fate of the rupee and the dollar. They are round lumps of silver hammered into a flattened and irregular shape, cleft with a deep groove on one side, and stamped with a tiny "chop" to show the reign or period of issue. As it is impossible to "ring" these coins, and most difficult to distinguish good from bad, a flat coinage of the same value has been issued, with milled edge and royal medallion and heraldic device. The *tical* is divided into four *salungs*, and each *salung* into two *füangs*, flat silver coins being issued for each of these values. The copper coinage, of which a large issue was made in Birmingham some years ago, is also a very presentable currency. A *lot* (about a farthing) is half an *att;* two *atts* make one *pai*, the equivalent of a penny; and eight *atts* go to the *füang*, the smallest silver coin.

As the *tical* is the largest coin in circulation, the interchange of money is of course a very cumbrous operation. The unfortunate European employee who goes to draw his monthly salary is compelled to take a coolie with him, or if his salary be several months in arrear, he will require several coolies and an immense stock of patience, to count and "shroff" and carry away the heavy bags of depreciated silver. Large sums are

measured in "catties," the "catty" being eighty *ticals*, a weight not represented by any current coin. During the last five years, however, all business matters have been immensely facilitated by the permission granted to the local branch of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank to issue bank-notes for sums varying from five to a thousand *ticals*. These notes are printed in English, Siamese, and Chinese; and though it took some time for the suspicious Siamese to reverse his whole experience and to be persuaded that a "promise to pay" was worth anything at all, yet now the circulation of notes is rapidly increasing. The presence of the bank has had a very beneficial influence, too, in numerous other ways, as a convincing object-lesson of business principles and commercial integrity to a people and a government whose keenest delight is to shirk payments, who are absolutely destitute of shame in money matters, and whose promises are literally made to be broken.

It was indeed a fortunate day for business men and for the whole people of Siam when it was finally decided to put away on the shelf, unused and unissued, the hundreds of thousands of new legal tender "Treasury Notes of the Royal Siamese Treasury," which an ambitious Finance Minister had commissioned a German firm to print for him, under the familiar temptation of thus creating out of nothing an unlimited supply of ready money. The dismay that had spread amongst the officials, both native and European, throughout the country at the idea of being paid in Siamese paper promises, was an eloquent proof of the character of the national good faith.

It is a common saying in Siam that you cannot throw a stone in the street without hitting a prince or a nobleman; and the supply certainly seems prodigious and inexhaustible. The ordinary European conception of the real value of these ranks is very mistaken, chiefly owing to the preposterous English equivalents that have been invented (by an Englishman, I fear) for the native titles. It is at once apparent that in a polygamous country the family of each king must become almost

innumerable in two generations; and while the blundering *farang* will give to each and all the same title of "Prince" and "Highness," native custom has worked out a sensible arrangement which misleads nobody, and marks off with the nicest gradations the actual percentage of purple blood. The king's sons are called *Pra Chow Luk Yah Töh.* If their mother be royal or specially favoured, *Chow Fah*—"Celestial Prince"—is added. The sons of the first of these are called *Mom Chow*, and of the second, *Pra Ong Chow.* The sons of a *Mom Chow* have the title *Mom Raja-wong*, and the sons of these, that is the fourth generation from the king, only *Mom Luang;* while the fifth generation have no title at all, and are simply plain *Nai*, or "Mr.," like everybody else. An absurdly misleading idea is therefore given when European Secretaries of Legation impose the title of "Prince" or "Royal Highness" upon every one of these four generations. The Siamese themselves have the sense to attach little importance or dignity to any title below *Mom Chow*—the grandson of a king.

European recognition of Siamese birth-titles should properly follow a very simple rule. All the Siamese who are entitled, by European law and custom, to be known as "Royal Highness," may be recognised by the distinctively royal prefix of *Somdetch*, the use of which is as inflexibly restricted by the Siamese themselves as the corresponding one among European nations. I believe the Siamese who are styled *Somdetch* now number less than twelve.

The above are all birth-titles. In addition to these, princes of the first rank sometimes receive special titles of honour from the King, either by favour or in recognition of services. They are *Krom Mun*, the lowest, *Krom Kun*, *Krom Luang*, and *Krom Pra*, the highest, and originally represented the headships of various departments of State.

The same mistakes in European nomenclature are even more glaring in the case of the so-called nobles. There is absolutely no hereditary nobility in Siam, and to speak of

Marquises, Counts, and Barons is a hideous absurdity, which causes the liveliest ridicule in Siam itself, and makes foreign snobbery a by-word amongst the people. Not a single family title of nobility, in the English sense, exists in Siam. Every post in government pay has a particular name or title, from the clerk on his stool in the cash department of the spirit licenses, or the half-naked inspector who sleepily watches the road-sweepers in the streets, to the Director-General of Public Works, or the Minister of Finance and the Treasury. Whoever holds a post is known by its appellation; when a man is transferred to another post, he changes his appellation (or name, as the European mistakenly calls it). But these so-called titles transmit nothing to the next generation; it is an unbroken rule that titles do not descend from father to son. The son of the highest *Phya* in the land—whether the latter be a general of the army with a seat in the Cabinet, or a Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of St. James—remains a plain *Nai*, like his father's retainers, until he obtains his first post in the Government service, when he takes the title *Khun* so-and-so, by which the previous holder of the post had been known till then. When by successive promotions he reaches a particular grade in the service, his "title" will change to *Pra* so-and-so, according to the special nature of his duties. His next step, after long waiting, is that of *Phya*, which is sometimes for special services, or as a particular mark of royal favour, elevated to *Chow Phya*. Beyond this he cannot go, except that he may be entered on the limited list of specially-exalted *Phyas*, who are allowed a gold spittoon, a gold teapot, a gold betel-box, and other insignia, presented to them by the King, and returnable on their decease.

The mistaken ideas that have arisen in European minds out of the above simple and practical arrangement are probably due to the fact that all these "titles," or rather "names of offices," are not expressed in the ordinary Siamese language, which would have dispelled the illusion by showing the intrinsic

meaning of the names, but are invariably in Pali, the sacred or classical language of the Buddhist Scriptures, in which all official names and royal attributes are expressed. This custom gives occasion for many curious and interesting observations, for one has to learn a complete vocabulary of Pali nomenclature in order to speak about royalties at all: the very eyelashes and toe-nails of a prince or king, as well as his coat or his boots, his dinner or his bath-room, having wholly different names from those of ordinary mortals. Not that these terms are used by royalties of themselves, but by every one speaking to them or of them. A volume would not suffice, I am assured, to explain the wondrous intricacies of varying pronouns and involved circumlocutions that are minutely attached to every distinct relation of rank and dignity between two speakers. For example, there are at least seven different ways in which to say "I," or "me," and four or five for "you" and "thou," each and all of which may occur in turn in a single conversation, if one is talking to or concerning several persons of different ranks.

With so carefully graduated and minutely understood a system of official ceremonial, it is at once apparent how colossal a blunder is made by speaking of Siamese visitors to our shores as "Marquis" this, "Count" that, or "Baron" the other. The height of this farce, however, is only seen when one recognises in a crouching figure, trembling on all-fours upon the floor of a Siamese office, a half-naked *Luang*, who had blossomed under snobbery in London into "The Baron"; or perceives under the battered police helmet of a seedy *Phya* the features of a man to whom one has been gravely introduced in Europe as "His Excellency the Marquis."

The scheme of transmutation under which Siamese rank masquerades in English, is that *Phya* represents "Marquis," *Pra* "Count," and *Luang* "Baron." One cannot possibly discuss this seriously; indeed, among the Siamese themselves, their English rank affords a subject of ceaseless chaff and jest. The Siamese Legation in Paris could tell a very good story to the

effect that they once received a telegram advising them of the arrival of the "Marquis de . . . ." * The united Siamese staff, failing to recognise the particular member of their own aristocracy thus announced, came to the conclusion that it must be a French nobleman in charge of a Siamese Commission, and applied to the French Foreign Office for detailed information. The officials there informed them that no such title existed in France, and suggested that it must be a Siamese nobleman whose visit to Paris had already been announced. To the infinite confusion of the Siamese Legation, this hint enabled them to recognise the native face under the foreign mask. In all the above I have spoken only of one sex. With regard to the rank of Siamese ladies, it must suffice to say that "Princess" and "Countess" in Kensington, have often been their husbands' house-servants, raised to the responsibility of concubines, in Bangkok.

It is therefore nothing short of offensive to see British officials and personages of rank making themselves ludicrous in Siamese eyes by taking all these farcical titles seriously. Our Foreign Office and military authorities might at least find out who an Oriental visitor really is, before appointing aides-de-camp, ordering reviews and guards of honour, and commanding the hospitality of Governors and Viceroys. One wonders how soon all this unreality and humbug concerning a fictitious "progress" will give way to an accurate understanding of the real condition of Siam, and thus clear the way for the true developments of which, as a country, she is undoubtedly capable.

* I omit the name because the bearer of it, who is well known to me, is a charming and enlightened man, hating the folly of which he is the victim.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE PRINCIPLES AND PERSONALITIES OF SIAMESE GOVERNMENT.

IT is difficult to convey to foreign readers any adequate notion of the degree in which the King of Siam is the head of the State. "L'état, c'est moi," is absolutely and literally true in his case. His personal will is at once the measure of the possible and the inevitable. When he has said *Dai* ("Be it so!"), finality is reached. To every Siamese the King is not alone the ruler of the land, but the actual possessor of it—of its soil, of its people, of its revenues. When the foreign missionary desires to convey to the Siamese mind the idea of God, he is compelled to employ the words *Pra Chow*, which are already used for "king." Omniscience, omnipotence, and absolute rightness are the inherent attributes of the King. To illustrate this, here is a perfectly true story. A Siamese prince received from London a packet of Christmas cards, one of which bore the text, "Glory to God in the Highest!" Without in the least understanding the meaning and sacredness of these words to Christian ears, and without the remotest intention of irreverence, he erased the word "God," and substituted the word "King," and sent it to the Palace. He had simply been struck with the peculiar appositeness of the expression, and the card gave the liveliest satisfaction in royal circles. No distinction, again, exists in the Siamese language between the personal possessions of the King and what

we should consider the property of the State. His Majesty's walking-stick and the policeman's baton are alike *Kong Luang* —"royal property." Where money is concerned, the peculiar convenience of this absence of distinction will be sufficiently obvious. It is only within a very short time that an attempt has been made to ear-mark any of the public revenues for national purposes. I dwell upon this point because it is necessary to understand the spirit which thus underlies the whole of Siamese administration in order to realise the precarious tenure and fictitious nature of the newly-advertised machinery of reform.

Personally, Prabat Somdetch Pra Paramindr Maha Chulalongkorn Patindr Tepa Maha Mongkut Pra Chula Chom Klao Chow Yu Hua is a monarch for whom, up to a short time ago, it was possible to entertain a considerable measure of respect. To begin with, he is the best-looking man I saw in Siam. He bears himself with genuine kingly dignity, and combines with great charm of manner the peculiarly royal gift of calling forth the personal devotion of every man, Siamese or foreign, whom he chooses to admit to his intimacy. He remembers who everybody is, what their interests at the moment may happen to be, and the right phrase of personal inquiry rises instinctively to his lips. Two or three days after I had had the honour of being received by him he noticed me among a crowd of officials, and mentioning by name the house and street where I was living, asked if I was finding the surroundings agreeable. More than all this, however, the King is a student, not only of the affairs of his own country, but also of the politics and literature of Great Britain, and to a smaller extent, of Europe as well. He reads English with ease, and spoke it at least as well as the Tsarevich during all their conversations, which were carried on in that language. Most visitors take away a false idea upon this point, as it is not etiquette for him to speak anything but Siamese, except as a special mark of intimacy. All the more prominent of the princes also speak and write English with a fair amount of fluency.

During the acuter stages, for example, of the recent trouble, when it was desired to keep the discussions in the Cabinet secret from some of its members, the conversation was carried on in English by the others without any difficulty. To Dr. Gowan, his late body-physician and peculiarly intimate friend, the King owes much of his English education and insight into the foreign point of view. He has read and can show his appreciation of the chief works of the English novelists, and every day for a long time he used to translate a piece of the "Arabian Nights" to his children, before the latter were able to read it for themselves. Unfortunately, to be quite frank, his Majesty unites with the Stuart charm the Stuart moral weakness, and he has more than once sacrificed, or permitted to be sacrificed, to the wearying intrigues of his immediate household and relatives, those to whose personal devotion he well knew himself to be under the deepest obligations. The first sign of this, which has never been forgotten in Siam, was given when he consented to the beheadal of Pra Pichah, his closest friend and most loyal supporter, under pressure from the Regent, on a charge which was well known to have been invented only for the purpose of gratifying personal animosity. Dr. Gowan's dismissal was due to like causes, and has been attended by disastrous results. A third victim was Prince Narah, to whose efforts are due the few restrictions now put upon the different Ministers in their disposal of the public funds, but who succumbed to their united defence of the old profitable system of misappropriation. The latest example of this trait was afforded when the King tamely assented to the dismissal of Mr. Morant, the governor of the Crown Prince and tutor to the royal children, who had lived for years in a position of greater confidence and responsibility with the royal family than any foreigner has ever done.

The King's interest in foreign matters was first aroused, and his eyes first opened, by his visit to Lord Mayo in India in 1872. From the Viceroy he learned a lesson in the principles of enlightened government which he has never forgotten, and

At Koh-si-chang: The King of Siam and the Second Queen.

the assassination of Lord Mayo, whilst the King was still in India, left an indelible impression upon him. Subsequently on several occasions he has visited the Straits Settlements, the protected Malay States, and the semi-independent States — which became humbly Siamese for the duration of his stay— studying the differences between Siamese and British administration and making open comparisons, greatly to the disadvantage of the former. Unfortunately, however, as I shall have to explain later, the King is no longer what he was.

The office known among foreigners as "Second King"—a title in no way suggested by the real Siamese title of *Wang Nar*— was abolished on the death of the last holder, Prince George Washington, the palace was turned into barracks and the position of the family obliterated. Consequently, the second person in rank in the country—above the Queen herself—is the Crown Prince, Somdetch Pra Borom Orosa Tiraj Chow Fah Maha Vajirunhis, whose position and title were created by a special royal proclamation in January, 1887, when the boy was already nine years old. He is not the first-born son of the King, for there are four older sons and several older daughters by concubines. Two of the latter were born to the King before he had reached the age of fifteen, the mother of the first being his ex-nurse. The Crown Prince holds his position as the eldest son of the First Queen. Both this lady and her sister, the Second Queen, are the half-sisters of his Majesty. It is only fair to the Siamese to say that this arrangement is not a royal or immemorial custom, and it by no means finds favour in their eyes. Up to the age of thirteen—he is now sixteen—the Crown Prince lived the usual spoilt life of an Oriental child in the women's quarters of the Palace. After spending the customary period of a few months in the Buddhist noviciate, and becoming, in Siamese parlance, of "adult age," he was compelled to live "outside." Here he would certainly have fallen a prey to the usual emasculating influences of an eastern court, which it was at once the interest and the design of his numerous uncles to place

in his way, but fortunately his royal father determined to save the boy from a repetition of the baneful experiences of his own early youth, and therefore acceded to the earnest pleading of his tutor, Mr. Morant, in favour of a strict and independent intellectual and moral education. Having once agreed to this course, the King was wise enough to see that it could only be carried out by giving absolute authority to Mr. Morant, and this he did at a special public audience. Placing in Mr. Morant's hands a small gold salver as a pledge of his confidence and support, he charged him to "control my son's actions, influence his character, and mould his will; guard and guide him and act towards him at all times as towards your own son;" while to the Crown Prince he added that he thus publicly, in the presence of his family and his Ministers, entrusted him to Mr. Morant's care. An arrangement like this will no longer sound strange when it is remembered that, owing to the King's life as described in the preceding chapter, father and son lived entirely separate lives and often did not see each other for weeks together. The regular student life which followed, safeguarded from deleterious influences that surrounded it like malaria, had lasted less than a year and a half when it was suddenly broken off by the series of events which was—and is—to work so much harm in other ways to Siam. In 1892, the King's health, which had for years required careful watching, became rapidly worse when the restraining hand of a confidential European physician was removed. Twenty-five years of harem life, combined with the excessive indulgence in drugs to which all Orientals are prone, had sown the seeds of physical and mental decay. His lassitude led him to absent himself from affairs for a long period, and to plunge into the pursuit of pleasure in the luxurious sea-side Palace which he built for himself at enormous expense. Thus the recently-formed "Cabinet" was left to administer the affairs of the country, without either the presence or the control of their natural head. Suddenly, like the explosion of a mine, came the crisis with France and the terrified presentiment that the ancient prophecy

was about to be fulfilled, which declared that "the kingdom of Siam will be lost when the King goes to live at the sea." He returned from his palace of indolence at Koh-si-chang literally at a moment's notice, determined to retrieve his position and the future of his country. But it was too late. His vigour was lost, his opportunity was gone. The French net was around him, the French gunboats came up the Menam, the ultimatum was presented, and after hopeless procrastination accepted. This shattering of his ambitions—and in his Jubilee year, too—reduced him to a state of mental helplessness, and he retired "inside" to his apartments, almost literally to his bed. For weeks together he never left his room, and the fact that he was still alive was not certainly known except to the five or six ladies who alone saw his face. In the collapse which thus ensued, the education of the Crown Prince was among the first things to fall, and his English guardian, left a helpless victim to the relentless and now dominant jealousies of court circles, was promptly dismissed.

The young prince, thus in a moment deprived of all control, has for the past year been allowed to fall back into a life of lethargy and self-indulgence. But for this, the country had good reason to hope well of its future ruler. He is an exceptionally clever boy, and had made astonishing progress in his English education. He spent his whole time reading English books. His favourite lesson was a study of the weekly edition of the *Times*, and it is not too much to say that his acquaintance with the figures and broad outlines of European politics is far greater than that of any boy of his age in this country. An Oriental at sixteen, however, is virtually of the same age as a European at six-and-twenty, so that this is not so surprising as it sounds. India was a pet subject with him, as it has been with his father, and no conversation was too long for him if it dealt with the development of the Independent States or the springs of Indian nationalities. While lacking the special charm of his father's manner, Prince Maha Vajirunhis luckily

possesses a character of singular determination, and this is the one thing that will enable him to withstand the intrigues of his twenty-four uncles and innumerable brothers, in the unlikely event of another monarch being required for an independent Siam. The moral weakness of the father, however, takes the form of physical lethargy in the son. This was yielding to Mr. Morant's energetic treatment in the shape of drilling, riding and driving; but since "breed is stronger than pasture," his present surroundings, if continued, will soon destroy any further hope in this direction.

While absolute power in Siam is thus vested in the King, faintly reflected again in the Crown Prince, the administrative and executive functions are delegated to the various brothers and half-brothers of the King, and other officials. Until quite recently, each department or section of government was in the hands of some one prince or noble, who was individually responsible to his Majesty alone for his actions and the state of his department. He obtained what money he could from the King from year to year, and did what he chose with it, except for the King's occasional criticisms and rebukes, without the embarrassing details of anything in the nature of accounts. But in 1891 a great reorganisation took place, and a general combination and centralisation, both of responsibility and control, was attempted. A Cabinet was formed, consisting of twelve portfolios, of which the holders are nominated by the King and removable at his pleasure. Each Minister has to submit his estimate for the coming year to the united Cabinet, who cut it about as they please by a majority vote, subject only to his Majesty's final approval. And each must further furnish to the Treasury month by month an account of all actual expenditure in minutest detail, before he receives the funds to meet it. This sounds absurd, but it is the Siamese system. The money must be spent before it is paid over, and thus every department is always a month in arrear in theory, and a good deal more in practice. A dozen match-boxes, for example, will figure on

the War Office accounts at so much per box, and if this detail should be omitted the whole account would be sent back by the Treasury to be amended, with the result—not altogether undesired—of delaying a settlement for a week. The evil consists obviously in the fact that in Siam the Treasury is at the same time the Exchequer and Audit Department.

The twelve portfolios which constitute the Cabinet, and the present holders o them, are as follow:—

I. Minister of Foreign Affairs. Krom Luang Devawongse Varoprakar.

II. Minister of Finance. Chow Fah Krom Kun Naris. Under this are also included the Customs and the "farms"—the imposts on spirits, gambling, birds' nests, &c.

III. Minister of War. Somdetch Chow Fah Krom Pra Bhanupandhwongse Varadej, the King's younger full-brother, who controls both Army and Navy.

IV. Minister of Justice. Pra Ong Chow Svasti Sobhon.

V. Minister of the North. Krom Mun Damrong Rajanuparb. Under this are all the provincial administrations north of Bangkok, except a few which still remain under the old *régime*.

VI. Minister of the South and West (Kralahome). Phya Montri Suriawongse. Under this office is the rest of the Interior and the military and civil *corvée*.

VII. Minister of the Royal Household. Krom Mun Prachaks.

VIII. Minister of Public Works. Krom Mun Sanprasidt. Under this are the railways, the Post and Telegraph Departments, and all public buildings.

IX. Minister of Local Government. Krom Mun Narès Varariddhi. Under this are the control of prisons, police, and police-courts in Bangkok, and some of the duties of a Home Secretary.

X. Minister of Agriculture. Phya Surisak. Under this

are land revenues, mining and other concessions, forests, and surveys.

XI. Minister of Public Instruction. Phya Bhaskarawongse. Under this are educational institutions, hospitals, and ecclesiastical affairs.

XII. Privy Seal. Krom Mun Bidhyalabh.

The deliberations of this Cabinet are supposed to be secret. Their control, in combination, over the affairs of the country is stringent and complete, excepting always for the unrestricted will of the King.

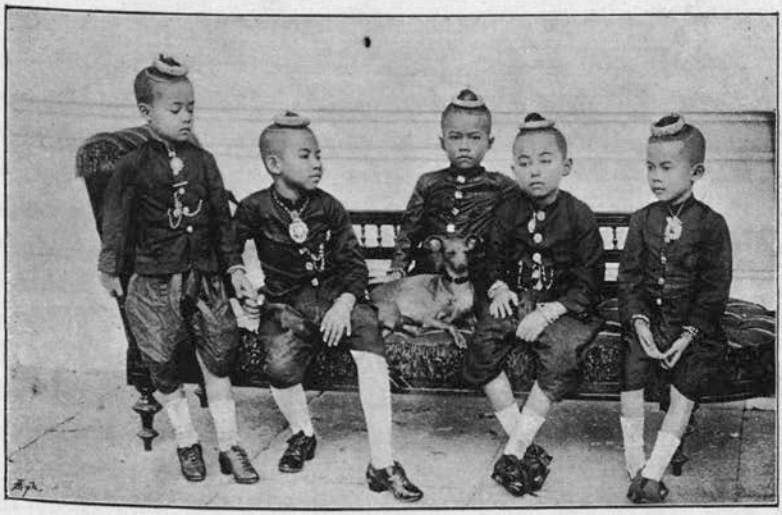
Until the recent collapse they met usually at eight o'clock in the evening, for all-night sittings, his Majesty often attending, and occasionally the Crown Prince. Each member of the Cabinet is absolute in authority over all the officials of his department, and as these are usually chosen from his own personal retainers who have grown up with him from his boyhood, and also from the members of his own and his wife's families, a change of the head of a department generally involves the change of nearly all the staff, irrespective of the fitness of the new-comers and based only on their personal adherence. The incredible folly of this system may be realised when I say that the draughtsman in the Public Works Department may thus be suddenly called upon to dispense medicine at a hospital, the clerk in the Treasury to act as adjutant to a cavalry regiment, or the tide-waiter in the Customs to become a departmental inspector of schools. To this inherent absurdity must also be added a functional one. Since the Cabinet Ministers, when they were fulfilling their normal duties, sat up all night for five nights a week, of course they slept all day, and strolled into their offices any time about sunset. The effect of this upon the ordinary work of the government may be imagined when it is added that without the Minister's special and personal sanction on each occasion nothing whatever can be done, not even a highway be repaired to make it passable, an urgent question answered, or an *att* of money spent.

Besides this central authority, there are also a number of Royal Commissioners for the Provinces, a new creation, nominated by the King for a certain period, with absolute powers. Their salary was supposed to be fixed at a sufficiently high figure to place them beyond the temptation of obtaining money by the usual methods of Oriental officials. They were appointed to draw the reins of the central government tighter over some of the larger provinces and the many semi-independent peoples that nominally recognise Siamese suzerainty. There is one at Chiengmai, whose jurisdiction extends over all the northern part of Siam, even the so-called "King of Chiengmai" and the other great hereditary princes of the Laos provinces being forcibly subordinated to him. There were others at Luang Prabang and Nong Kai, administering enormous districts which included the territory recently annexed by France. Others are at Khorat, and Oobon; the jurisdiction of the latter being likely to clash with that of the French along the new river frontier and especially on the islands in the river which were the scenes of the first hostilities. The next important Commissioner is over the Pachin province, a particularly able man; and through its proximity to the great Patriew river, his district is one of the wealthiest rice and cattle-producing centres in Siam. Moreover, in the ancient fort—which, by the way, Pra Pichah built, and where he was beheaded—he is forming the nucleus of the only disciplined and promising force that Siam has any prospect of possessing.

One of the results of the King's tour round the Malay Peninsula was his endeavour to strengthen his hold over the northern States there, which were very meagrely represented by their contributions to the royal treasury, in spite of their great potential wealth. Over these, therefore, the King appointed a Royal Commissioner with plenary powers, to the infinite disgust and thinly-veiled opposition of the native Sultans. All these Royal Commissioners are supposed to over-

ride the local governors and other provincial officials. One of the special reasons for their creation was the better financial control of the more distant provinces of the kingdom, and to this end, while they possess powers to appropriate certain portions of local taxes for local requirements, they are responsible for forwarding all the rest of the provincial exactions to Bangkok. An important feature of the new arrangement is that the Royal Commissioners exercise a military control in the provinces. There had previously been no military power whatever in the hands of the local authorities, any requirements of this kind being met by temporary expeditions sent up from time to time from Bangkok, as circumstances demanded. As things are now, a Commissioner has at his command on the spot a considerable armed force, which he is always liable to employ on his own initiative. This fact explains how it was in the power of fire-eating Commissioners to enter upon hostilities with the French on the frontier, and on the other hand, how the central authorities in Bangkok could so plausibly disown any such act when it suited their purpose to do so. This scheme of centralisation is much the most important—I might almost say the only effective—political development of modern Siam. So far as I know, it has not been described before, and its importance and significance are not yet appreciated in Siam; indeed, the new functions underlying the old title of *Kar Luang* are much more keenly felt than clearly understood.

These Royal Commissioners are almost invariably half-brothers of the King. This leads me to speak of the personalities of Siamese politics, first, in the case of those who are responsible for the present state of things, and second, of those from whom may be hoped, under improved conditions, any good work in the future. First of all, and chief in the former category, comes Prince Devawongse Varoprakar, Minister of Foreign Affairs, without doubt the cleverest and most far-sighted man in Siam. For many years he possessed unrivalled influence and power, alike through the King's confidence, his own brains, and the fact



THE CROWN PRINCE OF SIAM AND SOME OF HIS BROTHERS.

A ROYAL COURT-YARD, BANGKOK.

of his being full-brother to both the First and Second Queens. The *Krom Luang*, as his Siamese title runs, is a short man with a bright round face, of scrupulously polite manners, who conceals a mass of information and a very sharp mind under an exterior of simple good-humour and apparent frankness. His friends and enemies concur in describing him as an extremely clever man. He speaks and writes English with ease, although he has only spent six months in Europe, of which three weeks were passed in London. I do not think he is troubled with more faith than other diplomatists in people's motives, and *ab hoste doceri* is his motto in treating with the representatives of Europe. In his office he sits surrounded with a rampart of books on international law and modern diplomatic history, and the grafting of European punctilio and traditional precision upon Oriental *flair* and patience, make a combination difficult to beat. The Siamese Minister for Foreign Affairs has had a difficult part to play, but until recently the *Krom Luang* may easily claim to have held his own, single-handed, against many more powerful and more experienced comers. For some twenty years he enjoyed the perfect confidence and intimacy of "the King, my master," as he expressed it, but his position has now lost its former brilliancy. Through certain domestic events which have remained more or less a mystery to the outside world, Prince Devawongse experienced a fall. In Siam the loss of royal favour and the withdrawal of royal confidence is like leprosy: the victim is shunned, his power vanishes, and his former friends combine to keep him at a distance. Since there is nobody to take his place—there is literally nobody, except perhaps Prince Damrong, who could attempt to conduct a Foreign Office correspondence—Prince Devawongse still formally directs the affairs of his department, and preserves the necessary outward appearances in intercourse with the foreign representatives. But to initiate a policy, to direct a negociation, or restrain his brother Ministers, Prince Devawongse no longer has the power. The very serious evil of the situation is that any foreign representative who may

desire to make a communication, present a demand, or suggest a policy to the Siamese Government, is still officially compelled to go to Prince Devawongse, though the latter is now entirely destitute of the power to carry anything into effect. Under these circumstances—and this is a point upon which I wish to lay great emphasis—a clear understanding between Siam and any foreign government is impossible. Few men who have had personal relations with Prince Devawongse, and whose affairs have been at the mercy of his good faith, will pity him in his fall. The British Foreign Office, at any rate, which has had one direct example and countless indirect examples of his diplomatic methods, will shed no tears over the grave of his reputation.

The next most potent personality in Siamese politics is Prince Svasti Sobhon, brother of Prince Devawongse, nominally Minister of Justice, but at this moment Plenipotentiary in Europe to negociate with Great Britain and France. He spent some years with a tutor in Oxford, and was for a short time a member of Balliol College, where he was one of the many pets of the late Master, and he will be remembered by Oxford society of about nine years ago, as a very pleasant and intelligent young Siamese, professing advanced Radical and democratic notions. These he carried to such an extent as to deprecate any employment of his title, preferring to be styled plain "Mr." He gained several distinctions in lawn-tennis competitions, but his studies were not carried far enough to afford any standard of comparison. English, however, he acquired fluently. In due course he returned to Siam, and vital changes were expected to follow from his reforming influence. But the sweets of power and the enervating atmosphere of Siamese officialdom soon eradicated any high aims he might once have possessed. A Siamese in Europe and a Siamese in Siam are two different personalities, and an unpleasant incident which occurred soon after Prince Svasti's return, showed the change of his feeling towards Europeans. He has now become one of the most bitter opponents of European influence in Siam. After an unsuccessful

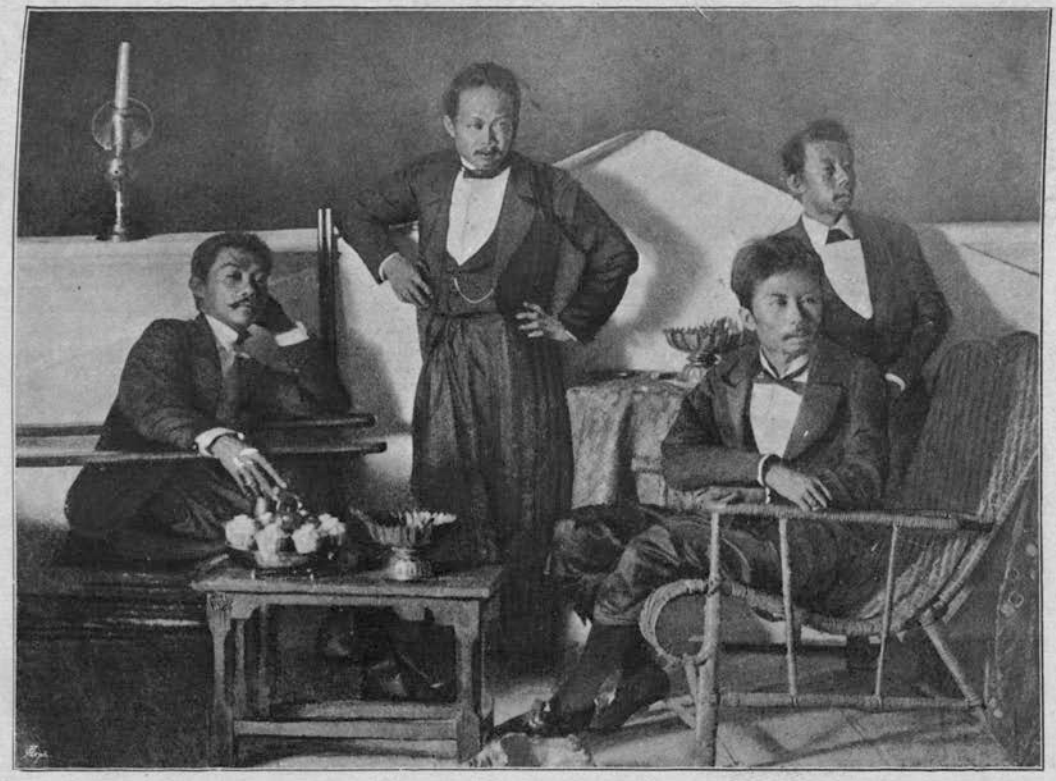
tenure of several posts on the Local Government Board, he retired for some time, as required by custom, into the priesthood. On emerging from this he was placed at the head of the new Department of Justice, of which I shall have something to say in the next chapter. As the troubles with France along the eastern frontier gradually developed, Prince Svasti was one of the strongest advocates of resistance, and it is probably true that he was more responsible than any other Siamese for the policy which found expression in the ridiculous and unjustifiable attack upon the French gunboats, and the consequent presentation of the French ultimatum. His recent conduct of affairs, however, while he has been in Europe as special Envoy, has been marked by much more discretion and seriousness.

It is a pleasure to turn to the personality of Prince Damrong. One of the first surprises of my original visit to Siam was in finding a prince who had then never been outside his own country, and who yet spoke English with ease and accuracy, was a regular reader of the English newspapers, conversant with European politics and literature, and anxious to enter instantly into a discussion with me upon the details of the complicated situation in home politics at that time. At the age of twenty-one he was a mere subaltern in the King's bodyguard. The Education Department, which he afterwards founded, grew out of the King's approval of a small class he had formed for the instruction of his own men. He is one of the very few Siamese who have any sense of either punctuality or neatness. When Minister of Public Instruction he made a daily inspection in person of all the hospitals under him, visited one of his schools every afternoon, and was always to be found in his office from eleven to four. I can hardly attempt to explain how remarkable this is in Siam. I first learned to respect Prince Damrong from a trifling personal incident. In Siam every request of an accredited foreigner is instantly granted—in words. The promise bears no relation whatever to the performance, but nothing is ever frankly refused. When I was exploring the ruins of Ayuthia, the

ancient capital of Siam, which was destroyed by the victorious Burmese in 1767, I discovered the broken-off and battered head of a Buddha lying buried among the almost impassable growth of tropical weeds. It had been there for half a century, and would, of course, remain untouched for ever. I marked the place, and inquired on my return under whose control this would be. On learning that Prince Damrong had charge of all matters of this kind, I asked his permission to send back for the head and take it away with me. He replied that he would consider the matter, and afterwards wrote me a very courteous letter, saying that although the head was broken and neglected, and nobody would ever pay any attention to it, nevertheless it was the head of Buddha, and therefore he did not think it would be decorous for a foreigner to take it away as a curiosity. The more I learned about Siam, the more I liked Prince Damrong for this refusal. His insight into the needs of his country is shown by his latest scheme for internal reform, namely, the proposal to bring under one responsible head in Bangkok the many clashing provincial authorities. That this is being bitterly opposed by all his rival Ministers is perhaps the best proof of its desirability; and though the King's weakness prevents him from settling this crucial question by saying "*Dai*," or "*Mai dai*," sooner or later its adoption must come.

Two conspicuous and yet curiously ineffective figures in Siamese affairs are the only two own brothers of the King, known respectively to foreigners as "the *Ong Yai*" and "the *Ong Noi*." By the ancient custom of Siam the elder of these would be the next King, as exemplified in the previous reign. The elevation of the Crown Prince to the position of heir apparent having naturally attached much suspicion to the alternative heir, the *Ong Yai* has chosen the wiser part of withdrawing himself entirely from affairs. There are two absurd rumours in connection with this prince: first, that he is mentally affected, and second, that he is cherishing hopes of securing the succession to the throne. A few minutes of his pleasant and

H.R.H. Prince Bhanurangse. Prince Devawongse. Prince Narah. Prince Narès.



AN AFTER-DINNER GROUP, BANGKOK.* *(A flash-light photograph.)*

intelligent conversation is sufficient to dispose of the first, and the second is based upon a complete misunderstanding of the present trend of Siamese affairs. The younger brother, Prince Bhanurangse, Commander-in-Chief and Minister of War, "the *Ong Noi*," or "Young Prince," called "the *Krom Pra*" by Siamese, possesses the personal charm of his brother the King, with much greater gaiety of manner. He is a past master in the art of organising pageants and processions, a gift greatly appreciated by the pleasure-loving Siamese. Of his geniality and hospitality I can speak from personal experience. His palace is a fine building, as an Italian architect was given *carte blanche* in its construction, and when it is necessary to entertain any foreign visitor of high rank, "the *Ong Noi*" always gladly undertakes the task. His influence upon Siamese politics, however, has not been great, though his sympathies have consistently been on the side of the best foreign influences.

Another personality of the same type is Prince Naris, the present Minister of Finance. He is a musician, a poet, and an artist, and by his work in each of these fields he has recalled the time when Siam possessed a genuine art-inspiration of her own, before this became hopelessly unfashionable in the face of discordant European trumpets and gaudy chromo-lithographs. There are two other men specially worthy of mention in the small group from whom intelligent and patriotic efforts might be expected in a reinvigorated Siam. The one is Prince Narès, for some years Minister in London, and now practically governor of Bangkok. Any one who has had an opportunity of seeing the prisons as they were and as they are, will need no other assurance of Prince Narès' qualities. In his instincts and point of view he resembles the type of mind of the English gentleman more closely than does any other Siamese. He is one of the few princes who really understand and sympathise with the common people. Although he has had more than the usual opportunities of enriching himself he remains a poor man. Except the King he was the first

Siamese to secure a European tutor for his sons, one of whom is about to take his degree at Trinity College, Cambridge, while another is high up at Harrow. The second is Prince Bichidt, the eldest of the King's half-brothers. After acquiring a unique knowledge of law, both Siamese and European, and a large experience in the higher courts of Bangkok, he was—in Siamese fashion—deliberately shut out from the Ministry of Justice, a post for which he was ideally fitted, and made Royal Commissioner of one of the far Eastern provinces. He took advantage of his exile to add a working knowledge of French to his knowledge of English, and created the first decent provincial organisation that had ever been seen in Siam. His special talents made him the only possible man to occupy the very difficult post of Presiding Judge at the recent State Trial of Pra Yot. Throughout the prolonged proceedings his conduct was such as to win him the highest praise from all the Europeans who were present. Like most Siamese, Prince Bichidt has a hobby, in his case medicine, his knowledge of this being remarkable, even judged by European standards.*

I have dwelt on these personal matters at such length because I have wished to show that while there are some of the Siamese princes—and these, as a rule, the most conspicuous—from whom no disinterested or stimulating efforts can ever be expected, there are still a number of others, several of whom I have not had space to mention, who under foreign stimulus and direction could be relied upon to take their places and do their duty in that reformed and prosperous Siam which I, for one, so earnestly desire to see, and whose "integrity and independence" Great Britain, in the words of Lord Rosebery,† is "resolved to respect and maintain."

* It is said that at last, after having been kept nine months in Bangkok doing nothing, Prince Bichidt has been appointed Minister of Justice; probably to avoid sending him back to Oobon, where he might have refused to lend himself to Prince Devanwongse's present tortuous policy on French frontier questions.

† "Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Siam," No. 1, 1894, p. 151.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FICTIONS AND FACTS OF SIAMESE AFFAIRS.

I HAVE shown what, in theory, is the government of the Kingdom of Siam. It remains to winnow the fact from the fiction. In the first place, to put it bluntly, the Cabinet itself now exists only on paper. For over twelve months, I believe, it has not once met, and has ceased to be a factor of government. How this has come about I will now try to explain. When the King was suddenly roused from his dream of ease in March, 1893, as already described, by the imminence of a national crisis, and returned to Bangkok to take up the reins, he found the Cabinet had made such good use of its novel freedom from control that he was unable, in his enfeebled state, to re-establish his personal supremacy. From 1892 to 1893 the Cabinet had held a nine months' carnival of intrigues and jealousies, followed by a three months' nightmare of cabals and recriminations. Thus when the country most needed a cool firm hand at the helm, it was at the mercy of a group of hot-headed and ignorant young despots, characterised alternately by bravado and terror, by resolution and vacillation. That the settlement of the Convention with France, such as it is, was ever reached at all, is due to the fact that the matter was at last taken out of the hands of the Cabinet and left for Prince Devawongse to conclude alone, thanks to the departure from Siam of Prince Svasti, who had been the chief obstructionist throughout. From that date, August 20, 1893, until November,

1894, there has not been, I believe, a single meeting of the Cabinet for governmental and administrative purposes. The entire machinery of government has come to a standstill. The estimates for 1894 have not been made up, much less sanctioned; no budget decided upon, no funds decreed. Only the most urgent expenses are being met somehow or other, casually, and by borrowed money.

This complete breakdown of government by Cabinet is due to the fact that the Cabinet was composed of an arbitrary selection of the King's half-brothers, together with a few nobles of no influence and importance. This band of brothers reflected perfectly the virulent jealousies of the various mothers that bore them: "to hate like a brother," is a Siamese saying. The meetings of the Cabinet furnished an ideal field for the exercise of these jealousies; a succession of changing personal combinations for the purpose of smashing each fresh influence as it threatened to preponderate, forms the history of their deliberations. The co-operation of all for the common good is unknown, and indeed inconceivable to any one who understands the temperament of this polygamous brotherhood. When the French gunboats were actually in the river, a bombardment threatening, and Siam tottering to her fall, the meetings of the Cabinet were like the wrangles in a pot-house, so much so that the more dignified members on several occasions declined to be a party to any further discussion. As was well known in Bangkok, not a little of this was the direct result of Prince Svasti's overbearing insistence upon strong measures against the French; his great influence, so deplorable in the interests of peace, being traceable to the fact that both the First and Second Queens are his own sisters. It is almost impossible to hope that the King's strong hand can ever be laid upon the Cabinet again, and now that twelve months of universal apathy have matured last year's seeds of suspicion and intrigue, the power of the Cabinet as a combined body with initiative and a policy is non-existent, and its

resuscitation is in the highest degree unlikely. Certainly nothing could accomplish this except either the King's complete recovery of health and prestige, or the emergence of some strong will from the general chaos. And as the only strong will in this jarring family is that of Prince Svasti himself, the remedy might not be much better than the disease.

It may be interesting, however, to glance for a moment at the results accomplished by the Cabinet before its breakdown. Take the administration of justice, for example. At the grand centenary of the founding of Bangkok in 1882, the foundation-stone was laid with great *éclat* of the New Royal Courts of Justice, which were announced as the inauguration of a new era of justice and judicial reform for Siam. When the buildings were finished, a grand opening ceremony to inaugurate this reform was announced to take place in 1886, but it never came to pass, and the buildings, erected at an enormous cost, with lofty towers and vast halls, were allowed to decay and moulder in emptiness for nearly six years, till the tower actually fell to pieces and had to be taken down, and the roof became so rotten that it had to be replaced with thatch, as it actually now appears, within a stone's throw of the Royal Palace gates. At last, in 1892, the various straggling courts of Bangkok—the Slave-cases Court in one corner of the city, the Land Court in another, the Criminal Courts in another, and the Appeal Court inside the Palace,—were collected into this one building and placed under the newly created Minister of Justice, who was to control the whole staff of judges, eradicate corruption, work off the thousands of pending cases, and codify the whole of the laws of Siam! As I have said, Prince Svasti was the first Minister. His strength of character soon led to various floggings of venal judges, and to a general uneasiness in all the courts; but so far as improvements in procedure or organisation of laws were concerned, it was merely King Stork instead of King Log. New stamp duties and fee exactions were imposed, proving lucrative for the department, but not a blessing to suitors; and the

administration of justice remains as complete a farce as it was when I wrote some time ago that "justice is not an unknown quantity in Siam: it does not exist. You might as well look for saccharin in salt or for silver in a pewter pot."

The so-called International Court, which is also under this Ministry, deserves a special mention. It was founded to deal with cases brought by foreigners against Siamese. Cases brought by Siamese against foreigners are heard, of course, in the Foreign Consular Courts "down town," where the native has every facility for getting justice. But when a foreigner has any claim against a Siamese, he first wastes several weeks in efforts to get his Consul to settle it through the Siamese Foreign Office; this in the case of the British Consul has nearly always been futile of late, owing to the extraordinary subservience of British officials to Siamese desires. But the real farce begins when the case at last comes before the International Court, which is the tool and servant of the same Foreign Minister who has just rejected the suit of the Consul. Here every possible device for procrastinating the trial, burking the evidence, suborning witnesses, and generally "besting" the *farang*, is resorted to with complete success, till after weeks of fruitless effort the case simply dies a natural death, and the European gives it up as a bad job. This condition of things has become, after years of license, such a great scandal that strenuous efforts are at last being made by the foreign community to improve matters, but the precedent of easy-going acquiescence so long followed at the British Legation has made it a hard task to get the evil remedied. The French officials, on the other hand, have long since refused to have cases submitted to the International Court at all, and wisely insist on the decision of disputed matters at the Foreign Office only. A volume might be written on the manners and customs of this International Court without giving any adequate idea of its unspeakable rottenness and shameless parody of justice in foreign cases. So much for fiction and fact in one branch of government.

In the Palace Temple, Bangkok.

I pass now to the Department of Public Works. This, though nominally active throughout Siam, is in reality—except for the Railway and Postal Departments—confined to the city of Bangkok, and is there occupied almost solely with matters conducing to the royal convenience or profit. It received instructions, for instance, to erect a palace for the Crown Prince within a period of nine months. This was three years ago. The foundations were dug, and they are now full of water, while the marbles, iron-work, and glass-work, ordered at great expense from Italy, lie in inextricable confusion at the wharves some miles away. Another of its undertakings was to build a new wharf for the Customs. To effect this, a dam had to be built during the season of low water in the river. The work was done so badly, that when three-quarters finished it was found to be useless and had to be recommenced. The rainy season, however, came on before it could be completed, and therefore the Customs, which previously had a bad wharf, now has none at all. Again, one of the principal roads of Bangkok is interrupted by the great canal to the north. Seventeen years ago an iron bridge for this was ordered from England, and duly delivered. It still lies in sections near where it should have been thrown across, and in the absence of bridge or ferry the remaining three miles of the road are useless. In the meantime the staff of the department is occupied in building rows of houses in which members of the royal family, chiefly the ladies, are investing their private economies, and in putting into splendid order the smaller canals in the city itself, upon which the royal eye is likely to fall, while the great main canals outside, the true arteries of Siamese trade, monuments to the energy of former rulers and officials, have been allowed to silt up until they are only navigable for a few hours a day at high tide.

The most conspicuous Siamese enterprise of recent times is, of course, the scheme of railway extension. At first the professed intention was to connect Bangkok with Chiengmai, and a con-

cession to make the necessary surveys was granted to Sir Andrew Clarke, and ultimately carried out, though not without many disputes. The line itself was never seriously contemplated, and the concession for the surveys was probably only given to avoid refusing the request of a man who had once rendered great services to Siam. At any rate, nothing whatever, except the useless expenditure of a huge sum of money by Siam, ever came of the scheme. The railway, sixteen miles long, between Bangkok and Paknam, the Piræus of Siam, was built under a concession granted to Commodore de Richelieu, and is paying its way. This result was due solely to European enterprise and eagerness to make money; by the Siamese Railway Department the line was met with hindrances from the very first. The only Government railway scheme which had any prospect of being successfully carried out was the line, 160 miles long, to Khorat, whence two theoretical branches were to tap the eastern part of the kingdom at Bassac and the northern at Nong Kai. The idea was an excellent one, though it is certain that the traffic under Siamese direction would not have paid for a very long time, and that the upkeep of the line would have proved a task too tiresome for any Oriental and too costly for any private purse. There was no difficulty about raising the money, since by Royal Decree the interest on the capital was guaranteed and therefore the wealthier members of the royal family hastened to invest their money. It was commenced under the directions of the Royal Siamese State Railways Department, at the head of which was Herr Bethge, a German, formerly the agent of Herr Krupp in China, who engaged a very large staff, naturally composed for the most part of Germans, at high salaries. The contract was secured by an English firm which has done much good work in the Malay Peninsula and Ceylon, Messrs. Murray Campbell and Co., who were understood to be financed by Messrs. Jardine, Matheson and Co. In the granting of this contract there was a great deal of unpleasantness, into which it is not necessary to enter here, as the story can be found recorded

in the columns of the English newspaper published in Bangkok. Up to the present only a few kilometres of the line have been laid, and of these a great part is merely for the purpose of transporting material, and will not form part of the permanent way, while the heavy portion of the work in the hill sections is practically untouched. The contractors have brought actions against the Siamese Government for departmental obstruction and delays, which have been decided in their favour by arbitration in London, and they have received large sums in compensation. There does not appear to be the slightest probability of this line ever being completed under the present *régime*, except perhaps as far as the King's palace at Bang-pa-in.

Under the Public Works Department are also the Postal and Telegraph services. The former has been under the care of Germans, who have had a free hand and have therefore established an excellent organisation, with ramifications all over Siam. The Telegraphs, from which all European employees have been gradually eliminated, are a byword for their inefficiency. For seven years the cable destined to connect the capital with Koh-si-chang, where all ships wait for their cargoes and whence they should be signalled, has lain on its reel in shallow water at Koh-si-chang. And as for the land-lines, the British Consul-general in his Report for 1892 says: "The telegraph lines have not been maintained in an efficient state during the year, and much inconvenience and loss has been caused by frequent interruptions of the international lines *viâ* Saigon and Tavoy. The line to Chiengmai, too, has been subject to so many interruptions that it would be almost better to have no line at all. . . . It may be said in favour of the telegraph department that Siam is a peculiarly difficult country in which to keep telegraph communication open. . . . These difficulties have, however, always remained the same, whereas the efficiency of the line has been constantly deteriorating, and this deterioration has been especially rapid of late."

I must say a word about the Customs, as it is a peculiarly

gross case of Siamese maladministration, and an excellent example of the defiance of treaty engagements with foreign Powers. It is, too, a serious matter in its effect upon foreign trade, particularly that of Great Britain, which is eighty-seven per cent. of the whole. Under the late Minister of Finance, a British Inland Revenue official of great experience and ability, Mr. David Williams, was lent by the British Government to place the Customs service of Siam on a proper basis. As a result of the free hand which was at first granted to him astonishing results were achieved, both in the presentation of the accounts and in the increase of revenue obtained. One would have thought that the latter fact would have been sufficient to assure Mr. Williams any powers that he desired. But under a new Minister jealousy of the *farang* has been too strong; by means of successive vexatious interferences, the gradual curtailment of his powers, and the intrusion of incapable native subordinates, he has been reduced to the position of an adviser whose advice is not taken; the service is worse than it ever was; the revenue has fallen; the accounts produced are untrustworthy; and difficulties with the various Consuls arising out of defiance of treaty rights are of constant occurrence.*

* Some readers unfamiliar with the East may wonder how it comes about that capable Europeans do not achieve better results in spite of native opposition and lethargy. I cannot give a better answer than in the words of Mr. G. H. Grindrod, whose experiences in Siam are mentioned later in the present chapter. I published Mr. Grindrod's letter in an article in the *Contemporary Review* for November, 1893, describing it as from a writer "personally unknown to me but whose name and position command respect." The Siamese seldom speak the truth themselves, and therefore they seldom credit others with doing so, and the letter in question was by them universally attributed to a friend of mine whose relations with the King at the time would have made it improper for him to write it. I am glad to have an opportunity of saying this. Mr. Grindrod wrote:—

"Not unnaturally, you will ask why the superior servants of such indifferent masters do not *compel* results by sheer force of character and ability. I confess myself completely unable to answer this question to the satisfaction of those who know the East only from books, nor can I picture to myself any illustration from western politics, which would adequately parallel the conditions here. Some vague conceptions of the truth may perhaps be gained from such facts as these:

'Nearly every department of the Government service is under the immediate

But it is the Education Department that has probably been most talked about and has brought most credit to Siam, owing to Prince Damrong's recent visit to England and his tour through Europe and India. I have already spoken in the preceding chapter about this enterprising and comparatively able prince. It was under his auspices that the Education Department achieved perhaps the only real and effective reforms in the country. Assisted by the advice, and still more by the energetic personal efforts of Mr. Morant, a scheme of national education was planned out, its foundations were well laid, and its various parts were developed in their proper order. The scheme was based on a system of vernacular education, for which the

control of a native head, whose education is inferior to that of a child in the lower standards of your elementary schools, and whose experience is that of a semi-barbarian bewildered by a superficial acquaintance with the delicate political and social machinery of advanced western civilisation. This curious 'Cabinet Minister' is almost inaccessible to his official subordinates, native or foreign, for he ignores all correspondence, and comes to his office generally at midnight—that being the time when his Majesty the King prefers to be awake.

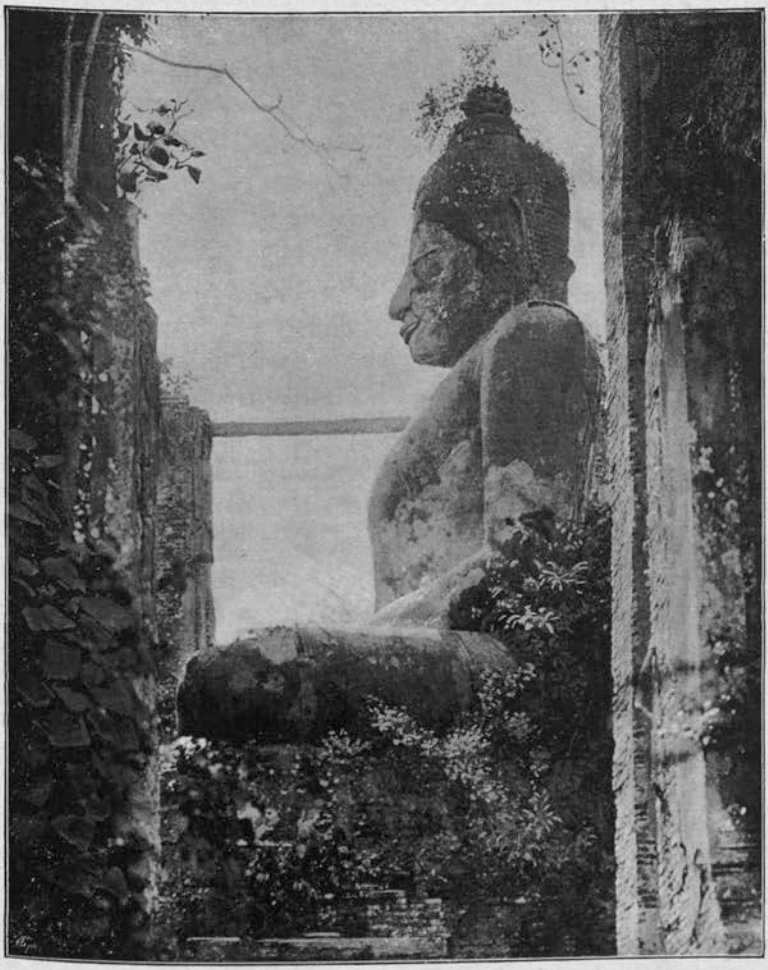
"Towards the European members of his department the native head entertains a curious combination of feelings: jealousy of the alien, envy of the latter's superior will and ability, suspicious dread of appearing inferior in any respect, and an ever-present consciousness that the 'farang' is a dependent. Since the initiation and development of all schemes, as well as the money and men for them, are absolutely subject to the veto of the Minister, it requires a very extraordinary combination of cunning and audacity to elude all these obstacles to the permanence and progress of work nominally entrusted to the European."

This point is a very important one, and Mr. Alfred Milner's admirable work on "England in Egypt" repeatedly emphasises an identical difficulty in that country. He writes: "The Government of Ismail was not wanting in European experts, whether in finance or in other branches of administration, at the very time when it came so hopelessly to grief. But its wisest and most capable employés were without influence. Their counsels were disregarded and their capacity rendered useless. It is not enough to have well-qualified Europeans in the Egyptian service in order to keep things straight. It is necessary that there should be some power behind them to give effectiveness to their advice." And again: "European skill is useless without European authority. Wherever you turn, that cardinal fact stares you in the face" ("England in Egypt," new edition, pp. 224, 286).

The Siamese Government is at the present moment arranging for more European advisers—for the army, the navy, and the Department of Education. Under these circumstances it cannot be too strongly stated that any European going out under the present Siamese *régime* is absolutely foredoomed to disappointment and failure. During the last ten years nearly a score have left Siam in disgust, and *not one has ever succeeded in his aims.*

Minister himself compiled a complete series of new school-books on rational lines to replace the hitherto universal rote-system which is the bane of most Oriental schools. Schools were opened under the Department, a schedule or code was drawn up to show the standards to be aimed at, and to serve for grading and comparing the various schools. Government examinations and certificates were arranged, which were gradually to include in their scope the irregular monastery schools—the only means of education for the common people; the intention being to raise the standard of teaching all over the country by a system similar to that recently introduced into Burmah. Upon this vernacular foundation, which was limited to the three R's (and even of these, reading and writing were practically new in Siamese education), was built up a sound knowledge of English. For this purpose Mr. Morant wrote a series of school-books in Siamese, for the acquisition of English through the medium of the native language—books which undoubtedly laid the foundation of any future development of Siamese education. The characteristic feature of the scheme is the maintenance of the native language as the vehicle of instruction, thus avoiding the evils resulting when the students are trained in England and reach their own country unable to turn their newly-acquired knowledge to any practical account.

So conspicuously successful was this scheme that his Majesty placed the education of all his numerous sons entirely in Mr. Morant's hands, giving him permission to found a special school for the royal princes within the Grand Palace, to be called the Rajakumara College, which it was hoped would in time develop along the lines of Lord Mayo's admirable college of the same name at Ajmere, and by educating the young princes in their own country remove the many dangers which attend their prolonged stay in Europe. It was in furtherance of all these schemes that Prince Damrong came to Europe in 1891 to study methods of national education, and that Mr. Morant engaged and took out to Siam a large staff of teachers, both women



THE GREAT BRONZE BUDDHA, AYUTHIA.

and men, to assist in the further development of their united plans.

Unfortunately, as explained before, when any individual shows signs of conspicuously good work or rising influence in Siam, his brother Ministers feel it necessary to crush him. Thus, immediately on Prince Damrong's return to Siam in 1892, at the most critical moment for grafting the new branches upon the now growing tree of his educational schemes, all its roots were ruthlessly torn up. The prince was transferred to the Ministry of the North, and his work given over to his worst enemy, an old and lethargic nobleman named Phya Bhaskara-wongse, whose conspicuous incompetence, to use no harsher word, had necessitated his removal from the directorship of the Customs. He speedily reduced the whole scheme to chaos by closing most of the schools and by ousting the men trained under Prince Damrong and Mr. Morant in favour of his own retainers and job-mongers, ignorant of the very meaning of the word education. Thus Mr. G. H. Grindrod, the Head of the Training College for Teachers, an Oxford man and trained pedagogist, now one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools, was in the position of having his teaching criticised and corrected by departmental "inspectors" whose preliminary training had probably been confined to inspecting spirit-jars and the like on the Custom House wharf.

I turn to the United Services. The Siamese Army List as it figures in the Official Directory must make the Minister of War feel proud indeed at the excellence of all his arrangements and the completeness of his organisation. Not a title is wanting, not a rank left out, not a branch of equipment missing —on paper. To describe what actually exists, however, would be useless, since no one in Europe would believe the plain simple truth. Three batches of Australian horses have been landed during ten years, for the Cavalry, averaging some hundreds each time, of which about fifty altogether have managed to survive the neglect and filth in which they are kept,

and still drag on a mangy existence in large and lofty but utterly neglected stables, whence they issue on state occasions in ragged files, with unkempt riders in tattered uniforms clinging nervously to reins and pommels. The Artillery is no better, with its recently-imported field guns, of which the brass sights were stolen and pawned within a fortnight of their arrival and have never been recovered; while the powder is in one place and the shells in another, and nobody knows where or how to bring them together. As for the Infantry, they come to drill when it suits them, desert by dozens weekly, and carry complaints and start agitations against any officer who attempts discipline. Many of them have never fired the rifles they carry; in fact the spirit of soldiery is as totally lacking in them as in a street mob. The officers—but here words fail. Imagine a Cadets' School, of imposing proportions and appointments, with four or five hampered European instructors, where young Siam is comfortably housed and fed and paid some thirty shillings a month to wear a uniform and play at studies which are never carried out; where the very simplest control and training are resented; and where military tactics from English text-books, fortifications on the black-board, and military engineering in the field, figure on the curriculum of youths who can read their own language but poorly, cannot spell c-a-t in English, and only know enough arithmetic to check a good money bargain over a ring or a necktie in a Chinese pawnshop. To such a pass has come a nation who once fought and conquered the Burmese, wiped out the Peguans, repulsed the Annamites, subjugated the Malays, and developed Siam from a small hill-tribe to the possessors of the greater part of the peninsula of Indo-China! These ancient qualities, it is only fair to say, still show themselves in the common people when they are sent soldiering, in their own fashion, in the jungle or on the frontier. The explanation is that Siam has aped the *farang* method without the *farang* spirit. There is actually no word for "discipline" in the Siamese language.

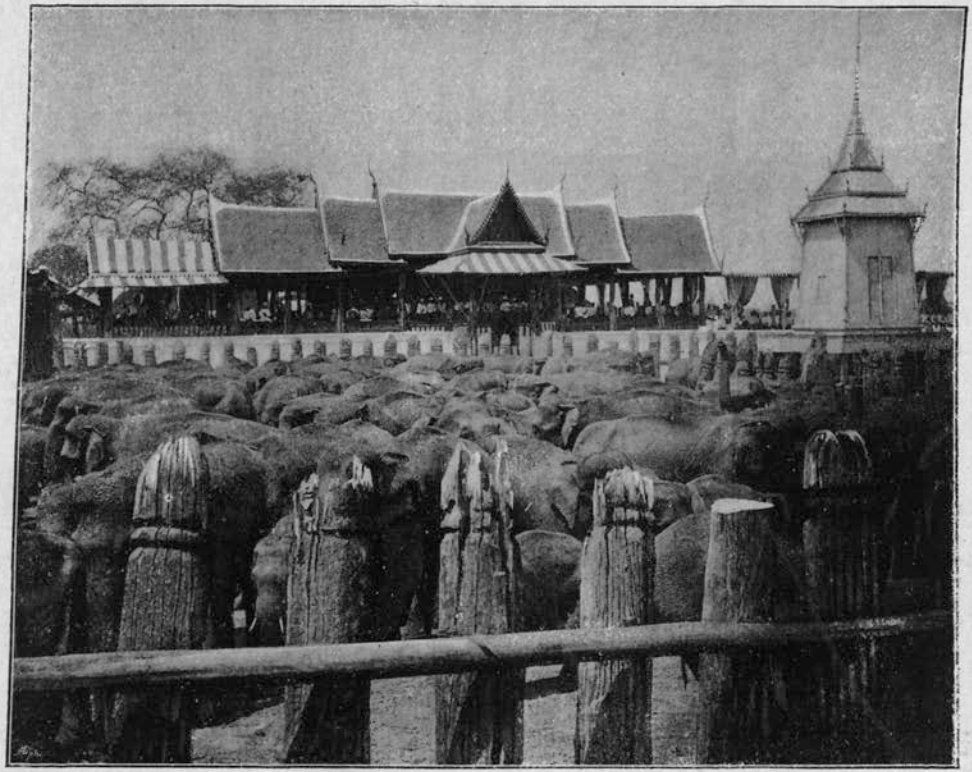
Of the few youths who have had some sort of military training in Europe not one has been allowed even to enter the service in Siam on his return, much less to have any authority to put things straight; while the indefatigable Dane, Major Schau, who has vainly given them his best endeavours for over ten years, has had each regiment taken from him in turn so soon as he has begun to bring it in the least degree into shape. Yet a more easily-led race than the Siamese has never existed; under European management and full control, with regular pay and steady discipline, self-respect would soon be developed, and troops might be turned out at least as serviceable as those of Burmah.

As for the other branch of his Siamese Majesty's service, the Navy, while the pretensions are less, the realities in some respects are better. The Danish officer M. de Richelieu, of whom I have already spoken, has given many years of labour to this, and in alliance with him, Pra Ong Chorn, unique among Siamese officials for energy and integrity, has created a large body of marines who possess at any rate the elements of discipline, however much they may lack technical efficiency. They are supposed to man the forts, supply the fighting crews for the gunboats, and act as an armed force on land whenever one is required, though their whole training for these duties consists of a little elementary drill and the bare knowledge of how to discharge a rifle. The discipline which does characterise them, and which yet distinguishes them brilliantly from other Siamese organisations, is directed to wholly different ends. They are neither more nor less than the body-servants of the royal household—another striking instance of the subordination of national interests to royal luxury. Underpaid, harshly treated, and ground by the *corvée*, they wear the uniform of sailors and perform the duties of coolies. When the King goes to Koh-si-chang or Bang-pa-in, the whole navy turns out to effect his household removal, to carry the pots and pans of the Palace retinue of innumerable ladies and women-servants (packing is an unknown art in Siam),

to build their "palaces" and shanties, to water their gardens, to erect and superintend their sanitary conveniences, to drag their jinrikishas, to carry their sedans, to dress up in their processions, and even to catch flies by bucketfuls to facilitate the royal repose.

According to the books of reference the Siamese navy consists of two screw corvettes of one thousand tons and eight guns each, several gunboats, and several sea-going steam yachts; a small cruiser, *Makut Rajakumar;* and the cruiser-yacht *Maha Chakri*, a "ram-ship" of 2,400 tons, 298 feet long, having a speed of 15 knots, and armed with four 4.7-in. Armstrongs and eight 6-pounder quick-firers.

I fear I shall find it difficult to make anybody believe what this paper fiction amounts to in fact. A bigger sham than the Siamese navy has never existed in the history of mankind. A number of vessels of greatly varying sizes are moored in the river opposite the Palace. Of these the larger ones are for the most part hulks, upon which the "marines" live; in some cases even the engines and propellers have been removed. The smaller ones serve as royal despatch-boats for river work, carrying the servants and supplies between the Palace and the two summer resorts. One or two are kept in decent condition for passenger work, but they possess no means of offence or defence. The King's old yacht, the *Oobon*, has succeeded in taking him round the Malay Peninsula, but if it has any guns on board they are of an obsolete and useless character. The *Makut Rajakumar* was built in Hongkong for the Governor of the Philippine Islands, but as he was unable to pay for it, it was sold to the Siamese in 1891. Upon this were put a number of muzzle-loading guns of the most ancient type, which had been lying about in the compound of the arsenal in Bangkok for many years. The *Makut Rajakumar*, however, won immortal fame in the battle of Paknam by sinking the small French trading-vessel the *J. B. Say*. The story of this battle has never been told, and as it is both entertaining and instructive I may linger over it for a moment.



WILD ELEPHANTS BEFORE THE KING, SIAM.

First, with regard to the famous forts. The principal one had, I think, six 6-inch guns on disappearing carriages. Only two men in Siam had even elementary notions of the working of these weapons—Commodore de Richelieu, and Major Von Holck, another Danish officer. The former was in command of the fort of which I have spoken. When the critical moment came he ran as quickly as possible from gun to gun and fired them one after the other. Needless to say nothing was hit. He then crossed the river in a launch and returned to Bangkok by special train. When one of these guns had been fired before the King a few days previous, out of six detonators five failed to ignite. This incident, however, had not shaken the confidence of the Siamese in the efficacy of their defences. The only technically-trained foreigner in Siamese employ at the time was a Danish naval officer, Captain Christmas. He had been placed in charge of the *Coronation*, the worst of the Siamese vessels, if one were worse than the others, and his share in the engagement was therefore necessarily small, consisting chiefly in escaping the ram of the *Inconstant*. The gunners of the *Makut Rajakumar*, into whose heads Captain Guldberg, of the Danish merchant service, had succeeded in hammering some knowledge of how to load and fire the guns above mentioned, had been taken off a short time before and placed in the royal yacht. The *Makut* was therefore chiefly manned by seamen of the coolie class. They had been specially charged not to ram the powder hard into the touch-holes of the ancient weapons, but to pour it in loosely. At the first onset they unanimously took refuge below. Leaving the wheel for a moment, Captain Guldberg chased them on deck again. When he desired to fire he discovered of course that the powder in the touch-holes was rammed as hard as a stone. He had to pick it out with his open knife from one gun after another, which he then fired in turn with his own hand. As he was not only his own gunnery lieutenant but navigation officer as well, he was then compelled to return to the bridge. After a trick at the wheel he again descended to the deck and

discharged his pieces once more. It reflects the greatest credit upon him that he was able to hit the *J. B. Say* under these circumstances. Her captain—who afterwards explained that he had "comme artillerie que mon fusil de chasse avec des cartouches à plomb No. 10"—and crew were formally arrested next day, blindfolded, and conveyed to the arsenal under guard. Amongst other incidents there, on asking for water they were given filth in a basin to drink. On the arrival of Commodore de Richelieu a few hours later they were informed that they might go anywhere they liked. One other Siamese vessel of war took part in this fearsome struggle. This was what was called the floating battery, a species of steam-barge upon which a single heavy gun had been mounted. Owing to the lack of tackle, I believe, this could only be loaded when the barge was alongside the arsenal wharf. At the first fear of hostilities, therefore, this alarming weapon was gingerly charged and the "battery" proceeded down the river and came to a standstill in a promising situation. In due course it got rid of its projectile. It is only fair to add that Captain Christmas, of the *Coronation*, Captain Guldberg, of the *Makut Rajakumar*, and Captain Schmiegelow, of the "floating battery," each claimed the honour of having sunk the only non-combatant present on the occasion.

It will naturally be asked, what was happening all this time to the one really serviceable vessel of war the Siamese possessed —to the *Maha Chakri*, the new Armstrong cruiser-yacht, with its 2,400 tons, its speed of 15 knots, its 4.7 guns, its two fighting masts and its ram? The answer is painfully simple, and is but one more example of the fact that in Siam, king comes a long way before country. The *Maha Chakri* was lying moored in front of the Palace, under strict orders not to move except it might be necessary to convey the King up-river. When there was actually a wild intention to collect all available vessels and descend upon the little French gunboats in the middle of the night as they lay at anchor before the French Legation, the

Maha Chakri was not to be included in the attack, although her tonnage exceeded that of all three French boats together by 600 tons. But even had there been any intention of using her, it could hardly have been carried out. Not once, I believe, since her arrival in Siam had her guns been fired, and nobody in the kingdom, except two or possibly three of the Danish officers, had any idea of the process. Her ammunition was put on board for the first time a few hours before the affair of Paknam. Moreover, her engines, which were large and complicated, could not have been worked without the English engineers, no Siamese having the remotest notion of their management, and these men as British subjects could of course take no part in the hostilities.

Such was the force against which the French gunboats had to contend. To complete the farce, it only remains to add that M. Pavie, the French Minister-Resident, accompanied by M. Hardouin, Consul-General, and Commander Bory of the *Inconstant*, proceeded to the Foreign Office next morning, and Prince Devawongse, Minister of Foreign Affairs, "congratulated Commander Bory upon his skill and daring in forcing the entrance." The same day, it being July 14th, all the Siamese vessels in the river were dressed with flags, the tricolour at the peak, in honour of the French national *fête*.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE TRUE STORY OF FRANCE AND SIAM.

ON September 1, 1858, the French fleet entered Tourane Bay, to bring pressure upon the King of Annam on behalf of the French missionaries, and captured the town. On February 17, 1859, Saigon, the principal city of Cochin-China, was captured by a combined French and Spanish force, and the province in which it was situated was annexed two years later, the delay being caused by the Anglo-French war with China. This process occupied, including delays, less than three years.

On June 5, 1862, France made a treaty with the King of Annam, by which were ceded to her the provinces of Mytho, Bien-hoa, Saigon, and the island of Poulo Condor. In June, 1867, the rest of Cochin-China, namely, the provinces of Vinh-long, Chan-doc, and Hatien, was annexed by France. The Viceroy, Phan-than-Giang, poisoned himself, "noble victime d'une politique cauteleuse qu'il avait inutilement combattue"! This process occupied five years.

So much for Cochin-China. Meanwhile, on the plea of dynastic troubles in Cambodia, a treaty was made on August 11, 1863, inaugurating a form of French protection over the ancient kingdom of the Kmers. On January 15, 1877, very extensive additions were made to French privileges and rights of interference, and as the "difficulties" in the way of good government seemed insuperable, a proclamation was made on June 18, 1884, in the name of the French Republic, and signed

by the French Governor-General, declaring a new constitution, the abolition of Crown property, and the commencement of a French administration throughout the whole kingdom of Cambodia, keeping up only the form of the native government. This process was completed in eleven years.

To pass to Tongking. In October, 1873, French ships under Garnier first entered the Red River to obtain the opening of its channel to French trade. Soon "difficulties" arose, and on November 20, 1873, the citadel of Hanoi was captured, heavy indemnities were paid by Annam, and France placed the province under a partial protectorate. This was extended over the whole of Tongking in 1883. This had taken ten years to effect.

Finally Annam itself, once the central suzerain over all the above-named vanquished countries, was finally reduced to submission by the bombardment of Hué, and brought under a complete protectorate by the same treaty of August 25, 1883.

In face of such a record of rapid extension developing itself through various stages of political protection, and culminating in wholesale annexations, France's neighbours in Indo-China may well have felt uneasy at any fresh manifestations of her interest in these regions. And any one who knew the boundaries of Siam as existing in 1870, may imagine with what misgivings the Siamese Government must have read the following statements in M. Lanessan's book "L'Expansion Coloniale de la France," published in 1886:—

"On the south-east of Laokay the frontiers between Yunnan and the States tributary to Burmah and Siam are very vague; we have every interest in leaving them in this shape, in order to be able to push them back some day to the Mekong. . . . On the west, from the frontier of Yunnan to the mouth of the Se-Moun, the Mekong ought to be the frontier of our Empire. . . . From the Se-Moun our Empire should cross the Mekong, include the secondary basin of the Se-Moun, join the northern end of the Great Lake, and include the provinces of Battambong and Angkor, which has always formed part of the kingdom of Cambodia (pp. 500–501). . . . The basin of the Se-Moun, which belongs to the basin of the Mekong, is separated from the basin of the Menam, which represents Siam properly so-called, by a mountainous and desert region, which constitutes a natural and scientific frontier between the basin of the Mekong and that of the Menam. . . . That mountainous frontier ought to be considered by France as the natural limit of

her Indo-Chinese Empire on the side of Siam. Having retaken the Great Lake provinces, which formerly were dependent on Cambodia, and the basins of the Mekong and the Se-Moun, we ought to adhere to the policy of respecting, and, if necessary, protecting the independence of Siam (p. 470)."

Great indeed was the Siamese dismay on hearing in May, 1891, that the writer of these words was being sent out by France as Governor-General of Indo-China with a large credit for purposes of colonial development, and that in his hands would lie the choice of the particular methods to be adopted by France for this "respecting, and, if necessary, protecting the independence of Siam."

These misgivings were soon to be confirmed. In November, 1891, M. Ribot began the process, by declaring in the Chamber of Deputies that "all the countries lying eastward of the Mekong, from the point where it leaves China, must be considered as belonging to France." At the same time historical researches were published in France, showing that Annam had in past times been in possession of all the country on the east of the Mekong, and even of large portions of territory on the west bank. We hear next of authoritative announcements that though Siam might have gained ascendancy over these districts from time to time in the past, and might indeed be in active occupation of them at the present time, yet Annam's territorial rights could not thus be allowed to lapse, and that the time was now come to insist upon them.

It must be noted that both M. Garnier, the great French explorer, and other authorities fully admitted, and all the French maps clearly showed, that Siam had undoubtedly been in possession of these territories as far back as 1866 at least, probably even 1836, but this was not held by France to give a valid title to any territories that had once been under Annamite rule.

Some French claims* in this direction had already made

* There were questions of boundary in dispute at this same period between England and Siam regarding the Mekong States, but only in its northern portions, above Latitude 20. As I shall deal with these questions in the next chapter, I shall now eliminate them as far as possible during our consideration of the purely Franco-Siamese questions.

themselves heard in 1889, as shown by the following letter from Lord Salisbury to the Earl of Lytton, on April 3, 1889 :—

The French Ambassador called upon me to-day, by appointment, to make a proposal for the neutralisation of Siam. He stated that the French Government had a twofold object in view. They wished to establish a strong independent Kingdom of Siam, with well-defined frontiers on both sides; and they desired to come to an arrangement by which a permanent barrier might be established between the possessions of Great Britain and France in the Indo-Chinese Peninsula. Such an arrangement would be advantageous to both countries and would prevent the complications which otherwise might arise between them.

It would be necessary in the first instance, that the frontier between Cochin-China and Siam should be fixed, and Her Majesty's Government would no doubt desire a settlement of the boundaries of Burmah.

As regarded the frontier of Cochin-China, the French Government did not wish to extend it to Luang Prabang, but they would propose to draw a line from a point nearly due east of that place southwards to the Mekong, and *below that point to make the river the dividing line between the two countries* until it entered the territory of Cambodia. They considered that, both on the French and English side, the boundaries of Siam should be defined up to the Chinese frontier.*

The last few lines give a clear statement of the French territorial claims as they then stood. After various negociations between France and Siam, it was at last proposed that a joint Commission should be appointed to decide upon the frontier between the two countries, and that in the meantime each side should observe the *status quo*. The precise conditions of this interim arrangement are given in Captain Jones's despatch from Bangkok to Lord Salisbury, on January 6, 1890 :—

As the existing situation of the contested districts will be maintained until modified by the decisions of the Joint Commission, Siam will continue to hold the Basin of the Mekong from (about) the 13th to the 22nd parallel of north latitude, with the exception of three small districts on this side of the Khao-Luang range, settled by the Annamites, where the routes from the east debouch from the mountains into the plains. These are :—

Ai-Lao-Dign,	in latitude	17° north.
Kia-Heup,	,,	17½°.
Kam-Muan (about)	,,	18¼°.

Beyond these to the north, the Siamese hold the districts called Pan-Ha-Thang-Hok ("the nation of five or six Chiefs"), and the French will continue to occupy Sipsong-Chu-Thai ("the twelve small Siamese States"), from which they have succeeded in driving the Chin Haws and other marauders.

* Siam, No. 1 (1894), No. 3. All the diplomatic correspondence which follows in smaller type is taken from the same much-edited Blue Book, and may be found under the dates quoted.

The terms of this arrangement are of considerable importance; for the subsequent hostilities arose out of allegations brought by France against Siam (as also by Siam against France), that the conditions of this *status quo* had been violated. The actual truth on either side was exceedingly hard to prove, as the country in dispute had been but poorly surveyed, and reliable maps were almost unobtainable.* It was definitely advanced, however, by France that Siam had pushed her posts forward so far eastward as to be within forty miles of Hué.

Meantime, from 1889–1893, the French Colonial authorities had been sending expeditions throughout the whole of the Mekong valley, and France soon reiterated her accusations of Siamese encroachment and made definite claims to all territory east of the left bank of the Mekong. The points at issue are clearly given in a despatch from the Marquis of Dufferin to Lord Rosebery on February 7, 1893 :—

> In my despatch of the 25th ultimo I forwarded to your Lordship a report of the discussion upon the Foreign Office Estimates with regard to the alleged encroachments of the Siamese on districts stated to be under the protection of France on the left bank of the Mekong. . The charges brought against the Siamese Government are summed up in a speech of M. François Deloncle, contained in the full report of the debate. M. Deloncle asserted that the Siamese persistently ignore the rights of the kingdoms of Annam and Cambodia over the whole of Laos and the territories situated on the two banks of the Mekong, . . . that the Government were still of the opinion expressed by their predecessors two years ago, to the effect that the left bank of the Mekong was the western limit of the sphere of French influence, and that this opinion was based on the incontestable rights of Annam which had been exercised for several centuries. He added that these rights were too important to be abandoned, and too well established for the Siamese to persist in contesting them in the presence of the determination of France to put a stop to their violation.

These statements show a distinct advance in the French Colonial Policy, from the attitude of maintaining the *status quo* till a Commission could settle the question, into that of ignoring

* M. Pavie's magnificent map was not published till 1893. The Siamese Government Survey Map published under Mr. Macarthy's auspices cannot pretend to accuracy of boundaries, is largely made up of guesswork, and is useless for political purposes.

all discussion and peremptorily insisting on the immediate recognition of French claims.

These public announcements were the signal for the commencement of still further active developments in French policy; and that this was clearly realised by the British Government is shown by the following letter from Lord Rosebery to Lord Dufferin, on March 8, 1893:—

M. Waddington spoke to me to-day on the subject of the Mekong River and the boundaries of Siam. I pointed out to His Excellency that there seemed to be one initial difficulty. It was that the Mekong appeared to run through Siam, and that we could hardly say that one part of Siam was under British influence and another part under French. M. Waddington rejoined that his Government did not admit that any part of Siam lay on the left bank of the Mekong, but regarded the country lying on that side as belonging to Annam. I could not conceal my surprise at this communication.

When we remember the numerous explicit announcements of the French intentions and claims to the left bank which I have already quoted, we must regard this surprise as being diplomatic in character. Plans soon developed into action, as evidenced by the following telegram from Captain Jones, V.C., the British Minister in Bangkok to the Earl of Rosebery, under date of March 10, 1893:—

Charge of invading Annam has been brought against Siamese Government. They protest, and are prepared to refer matter to arbitration, but French Government seem to be unwilling to accept this.

How did the Siamese meet this new development? The next telegram from Captain Jones (March 15th) clearly shows:—

Instructions have been received by the French Minister to put forward a claim bringing the boundary of Annam up to the eastern bank of the River Mekong. The Siamese Government protests against this pretension on the part of Annam, which implies an increase of territory. They insist that any delimitation must be based upon actual possession, and that such a basis can only be modified by any rights which can be justified by the French. Siam is willing to refer any doubtful points to arbitration.

In thus speaking of "insistence" it is plain that Siam was determined to put her foot down, and refuse passive acquies-

cence. She is willing to submit to arbitration as a possible solution; but in any case she definitely refuses the French demands as at present made, and prefers to face the worst. I may remark that this was probably the decision of the Cabinet, the King being away in Koh-si-chang at the time.

A very plain intimation followed from France that resistance would be met by insistence, and that Siam must take the consequences. The situation at this moment is clearly given in the following abstract of a telegram, dated April 12th, sent by the Siamese Minister for Foreign Affairs to his Legation in London, and by it communicated to Lord Rosebery.

The *modus vivendi* proposed by Siam has been refused by France, who insists upon the withdrawal of the Siamese military and official posts east of the Mekong. In their place Annamite posts will be set up, and the French claims will be pushed forward as far as possible.

The Siamese Government are unable to grant the terms asked, but will be ready to submit the matter to international arbitration.

The French gunboat now at Bangkok evidently intends to remain there, and another gun-boat now on the way is expected to arrive on the 8th instant.

Although friendly intentions towards Siam are professed, there is every appearance of forcing unacceptable terms upon the Siamese Government by menaces. Negociations between the two parties are still pending, but the Siamese Government are determined to resist to the utmost.

It was in fact necessary for Siam to choose definitely which of two policies she would adopt, namely, either to submit to the French claims under protest, as being too weak to hope for a successful resistance, adding perhaps an appeal for a subsequent reference of the whole matter to arbitration; or to make up her mind once for all to resist at all costs. The above telegram clearly shows her to have determined upon the latter policy. This being so, it was manifestly her first duty to take every possible means to carry it through successfully. How far this was done I shall presently show.

France having thus definitely stated her determination, naturally proceeded on her way, and those who were carefully watching events in Bangkok felt no surprise when news came of two important events. On April 3rd M. Delcassé received the following telegram from M. de Lanessan at Saigon:—

In accordance with your instructions and in consequence of the measures I have taken, Stung-Treng was occupied on Saturday by our troops without striking a blow. The Siamese Commissioner and soldiers retired at the summons of the French Resident, who was conducting the operation.

And the next step was taken on April 8th :—

Our troops have occupied the island of Khone on the 4th April without firing a shot. The Siamese Commissioner and soldiers retired at the request of the French Resident. We have already taken up our positions at Stung-Treng and Khone.

Both these places were strategically of the first importance. A traveller who was recently there says that Stung-Treng is a town as large as Bassac, and that it completely commands the route from Annam, and offers an excellent base of operations for the French, should they desire to despatch an expedition westwards, while the island of Khone is one of the largest on the Mekong River, practically commanding the approach to the rapids, and could be held by a handful of men against the most determined assaults.

One of the first steps that the Siamese ought to have taken, if they had been in earnest in their professed determination to "resist to the utmost," was the reinforcement of their small military stations, and the inauguration of a careful plan of defence, at both of these points. But the whole campaign seems to have been conducted, like everything else in Siam, with a great deal of talk and vapouring about the excellence of their intentions, and their firm determination to act up to their position as an independent nation, while the solid work was hopelessly neglected, and the only steps taken were complete shams. The very fact that the garrisons in these places retired on each occasion seems to the European critic an unintelligible outcome of the loud pronouncements of "resistance to the utmost."

What in the meantime was England doing? It is now pretty well known that up till the last moment (even up to July 14th) Siam had counted upon the effective intervention of Great Britain, and had fondly imagined that the whole affair would

prove to be French bluster, which would be baffled by English firmness; but to her great disgust she found that so long as the questions in dispute were confined to the "lower Mekong," the British Foreign Office confined itself to giving advice. Siam had not realised that England could hardly afford to go to war with one of the leading Powers of Europe to help Siam out of the results of her own folly. To all entreaties for assistance answers were returned that the quarrel was clearly one between Siam and France, in which England could have no *locus standi*. Lord Rosebery practically said, "As you say you are weak and helpless, we counsel you to avoid by all means any policy which may provoke France to strong measures," and it is difficult to see, remembering the composition of the British Cabinet, what other reply he could have made. England's attitude was very pointedly announced to the Siamese Government both in Bangkok and in London, as the following telegram from Lord Rosebery to Captain Jones (April 24th) clearly shows:—

Mr. Verney, the English Secretary of the Siamese Legation in London, called to-day at the Foreign Office, and spoke with Sir Philip Currie in regard to the present state of the political relations between France and Siam. He was told that instructions had been sent to you by telegraph to recommend the Siamese Government that they should take no action which would precipitate a rupture with France, and that they should exercise great caution. Mr. Verney inquired whether, in Sir P. Currie's opinion, it would be wise of the Siamese to endeavour to obtain the mediation of European Powers. Sir P. Currie replied that he thought they had much better endeavour to get the best terms they could from the French Government. Mr. Verney said that the French have not yet laid claim to Luang Prabang.

The Siamese, however, preferred to go their own gait, and a Bangkok newspaper of April 11th remarked:—

"Since the arrival of the *Lutin* the Siamese appear to have been pretty busy with war-like preparations. We learn that the Paknam forts are being strongly manned, and that a large force has been moved down to Paknam in readiness for eventualities."

Again, on the 14th:—

"The Siamese authorities are well posted on passing events in the Mekong region, and are hurrying arms and ammunition *viâ* Pachim, and along the

Bang-pa-kong river to their forces in the Mekong valley. A Siamese steamer has left Pachim with a large supply of guns and ammunition for the Siamese posts along the river Mekong."

Again, on the 18th :—

"The construction of a new fort has been ordered at Paknam with all the despatch possible. The contract has been given to a Chinaman, who is hurrying down materials. Notice has been given to the Governors and population along the east coast from Chantabun southwards to supply no warships with provisions, or in any way assist in victualling them. The Siamese Foreign Minister is said to treat the present crisis very lightly. He counts on Siam being able to place from 9,000 to 12,000 men in the field, and asserts that the Siam of to-day is not the Siam of twenty years ago. The naval department is counted upon to supply 2,000 able-bodied seamen and marines. Phya Surisak might reasonably raise 8,000 or 10,000 men. With this number the Foreign Minister thinks that Siam would make so serious a fight that France would hesitate before beginning hostilities."

Again, on the 28th :—

"The Siamese are impressing every available man for service, and the fields are said to be entirely denuded of male workers. Guns and ammunition are being eagerly bought up, and the raw levies pushed on towards the eastern frontier. The King is said * to have voted 10,000 catties (about £50,000) from his private purse to be devoted to the buying of war material. Chains and other obstacles are being hurried down to the mouth of the river with the intention of blocking the entrance. Every available pound of gunpowder in the Singapore market has been bought up for Siam."

The vernacular newspaper (*Dhammasaht Vinichai*) put it still more frankly in a long inflammatory article, which ended, "We will form our ranks and give our blood for our country, our King, our religion, our race."

Meanwhile, apparently blind to the hopelessly defective state of her forces, Siam actually undertook hostilities up-country. When the King's half-brother, the Royal Commissioner at Bassac, heard that the small force at Stung-Treng had retired (as before stated) before the French force on April 1st, he at once sent 800 men to drive the French out. These men, while reconnoitring on the river, surprised a party of coolies under a

* This is a fact, and the money was handed over to the Naval Department, but it is impossible to say how it was all expended.

French officer, Captain Thoreux, conveying stores to the garrison at Khone, at once attacked them, and owing to superior numbers easily overpowered them. The coolies abandoned their loads, which fell into the hands of the Siamese, together with the person of the officer, who was made prisoner and kept in custody at Bassac.

I will here note one of the most conspicuous of the many inaccurate versions of their actions which were made from time to time by the Siamese and their representatives with a view to mislead the British Government and conceal the real trend of Siamese policy *when its effects seemed unfortunate*. Seeing that Bassac is in telegraphic communication with Bangkok, and that the Cabinet had been daily sending orders to that district, and had just despatched additional troops to carry them out, it is quite impossible that the Siamese Government were honest in instructing their Secretary, Mr. Verney, to say to Lord Rosebery that "the Siamese Government were not the instigators of this attack, but that there were in the Mekong district a number of half-savage tribes who were ready to take any opportunity to create disturbance." And Mr. Verney could not possibly have made this statement of his own knowledge.

This trick of altering facts was constantly played, and in the total ignorance of Siamese matters which then prevailed at the British Legation in Bangkok it often gained the point at which it was aimed, viz., the rousing of British sympathy for Siam and antipathy toward France. Thus the Siamese policy was that of facing-both-ways; they were defiant in Bangkok, and pacific in Europe. On May 13th Lord Rosebery is assured by the Siamese Government that "the Siamese Government were not the instigators of the attack;" and again on June 4th, that "the encounter was in opposition to their wishes." While, on the other hand, M. Pavie is informed by Prince Devawongse in Bangkok on May 20th, that "The Siamese Government consider that the capture of the French officer referred to was justified by the circumstances. He committed an act of war, being in

command of a hostile and aggressive expedition upon Siamese territory. They are willing to set him at liberty as an act of courtesy towards the French Government, with whom they do not wish to quarrel, but it is not true that they have ever expressed regret at his being taken prisoner. The alleged regrets and apologies on the part of the Siamese Government appear to be inventions made for the purposes of the newspapers in Paris." And this is repeated still more strongly in Prince Devawongse's *note verbale* of June 2nd: "The Siamese Government cannot admit, even indirectly, that in capturing Captain Thoreux when in command of an aggressive and hostile expedition they acted wrongly."

Another glaring example of this same misrepresentation is the statement made by Mr. Verney, of course under instructions, to Lord Rosebery, "that no demands whatever were addressed to the Siamese Government by France before the French troops seized the territory on the east of the Mekong, . . . that no information as to the intentions of the French Government had reached the Government of Siam except that obtained from the newspapers." Whereas, for months previous the French Legation had been urging their claims at the Siamese Foreign Office, and the French Consul had had frequent interviews at the Siamese Treasury about the amount of the pecuniary claims in the flagrant case of M. Baroton; and a fortnight earlier Prince Devawongse had actually received a clear statement of all demands from M. Pavie, as given in Captain Jones's telegram to Lord Rosebery on April 13th. It was this constant prevarication and short-sighted deception, so invariably characteristic of Siamese politics, that finally roused the French Government to desperate measures, and discounted all Siamese protestations at a later date, when perhaps they had a really good case to argue.

The open jubilation in Bangkok when the news was spread of the triumphant capture of a live *farang* officer sufficiently showed that the Siamese were still in their fool's paradise, and the

general determination to resistance was greatly strengthened. The King made personal visits to the Paknam forts, and troops were massed in Bangkok itself. Under these circumstances, it should not have been matter for surprise to the authorities in London—it certainly was not so to any one in Bangkok—to hear the news contained in the following telegram from the British Commander-in-Chief, China, to the Admiralty :—

Shanghai, *May* 26, 1893.

"French Admiral in *Triomphante*, Hongkong, *Inconstant*, *Comète*, *Lion*, sailed from Hongkong to the southward, probably for Bangkok."

Before long, news arrived in Bangkok and London that the French had been steadily carrying out the same forward policy in the northern regions also, and had compelled the Siamese to evacuate the chief posts near the Annamite mountain range, commencing at Kammuon on May 26th. This, however, was at once replied to by the Siamese in the same manner as at Stung-Treng. A strong attack was planned and ordered by another half-brother of the King, who was the Royal Siamese Commissioner at Nong Kai. He sent a body of troops with strict orders to expel the French from the whole of the territory to the east of the Mekong in the Kammuon district, and to "*compel their retirement, by fighting, if necessary, to the utmost of their strength.*" * In consequence of this, on June 13th, a French sergeant and some seventeen Annamite soldiers were killed and all their property destroyed, this being the incident which afterwards gave rise to the State trial of Pra Yot, the Commissioner of the Kammuon district.

Will it be believed that in this matter also the Siamese Government repeated their former manœuvre of throwing the entire blame on the local authorities, so soon as they were threatened with the consequences of their actions? So far, indeed, was this repudiation carried that it was not until ten

* The original written text of these orders was produced by the officer of the Expedition in open court at Bangkok in February, 1894, and every one was struck by the unmistakable directness of their tone as given in the vernacular.

months afterwards that the Cabinet at length definitely acknowledged their responsibility for the action, in an official statement made with Prince Devawongse's sanction in open Court on March 12, 1894; and then only because it had by that time come to be represented in a more favourable light by the European lawyers engaged to defend Pra Yot, as being a distinguished example of military courage.* And even after this, when the French Mixed Court re-tried the case in 1894, and condemned to twenty years' penal servitude the man put forward by the Siamese Government as the author of the so-called *attentat*, Prince Devawongse kept a discreet silence concerning the Cabinet's responsibility, and allowed the sentence to be carried into effect. Yet it was manifest to every one that if the King placed any value on the loyal obedience of his servants or on his own reputation for consistency and straight dealing, his only right course was to reassert the Cabinet's initiative in the action, and inform the French Government that the responsibility and consequently the penalty for the whole affair lay entirely with his Government. But the King's moral cowardice permitted the penalty for the Cabinet's folly to be visited upon the innocent scapegoat who had merely carried out the orders he had received (when to have done otherwise would by Siamese law have cost him his head). This man now languishes in chains in a Siamese prison for having loyally obeyed his officer's orders, and the French Consul makes periodical visits to the gaol to see that the sentence of penal servitude is fully carried out!

Throughout May and June the general war-spirit in Bangkok increased, literally from hour to hour; and offensive and defen-

* The French official account of this incident was (Blue Book, No. 78) that Pra Yot "himself with a shot from a revolver assassinated the Inspector [Grosgurin] in his bed, to which he was confined by his illness." This was derived from the evidence of the one witness, Bun Chan, who afterwards disproved it at the State trial under cross-examination. The actual facts were that Grosgurin was firing from the window of his house, and was struck by a chance shot from outside, fired in the mêlée, Pra Yot himself *not having a gun*. All this was proved at the trial.

sive operations were continuously carried on. His Majesty went to Paknam on May 10th, and spent a long time there inspecting the forts commanding the bar of the river, and himself fired one of the guns. The more honest of those in the Royal retinue could clearly see that the forts were incomplete and the ammunition of little use, while the utter want of training of the officers and men was ludicrously conspicuous. But the mere roar of the great gun and the sight of the projectiles as they dropped into the sea far away seemed sufficient to assure His Majesty and his suite of flatterers of the certainty of victory, and many childish expressions of glee and anticipated triumph were uttered.

On May 20th, 400 Siamese troops left for Bassac, and all manner of talk was indulged in at the Cabinet about collecting three divisions of thirty thousand men each and simply sweeping the French into the sea. The fact that these men (even if it had been possible to collect them) would of course have been taken straight from the paddy-fields without knowing a rifle from a right-about-face seemed of no consequence. Moreover, there was not in all Siam a single officer * either properly trained himself or capable of drilling these raw levies; still less one with any knowledge of conducting military operations.

Another of the signs of the Siamese war-fever—perhaps the greatest of great Siamese shams—was the foundation at this date of a Red Cross Society amongst the ladies of the Palace for the treatment of such soldiers as might be wounded in the battles so confidently expected. After much collecting of money and farcical ceremonials, and the sending of hogsheads of Epsom Salts and thousands of smelling bottles and blankets and dozens of cases of surgical instruments of which nobody knew the use, to lie neglected in the jungle,† this strange parody of a noble

* Except the Dane, Major Schau, who was nominally head of the school for Non-Commissioned Officers, and he was kept almost without work until the French had actually arrived off Bangkok.

† These are facts.

effort ultimately showed itself in its true colours, after the famous "battle" of Paknam. So incredible is the tale if told by a traveller that I had better quote the words of a Bangkok newspaper at the time, the truth of which has been fully confirmed to me by eye-witnesses:—

"We referred some weeks back to that much-boomed society known as the Red Cross Society and suggested that the people were being a little humbugged on the matter. We were not wrong. The battle took place on Thursday evening, and the wounded only found their way to the hospital at dawn on Friday" and this, I may add, through the kind exertions of a European who himself took them uninvited to the European hospital, the Red Cross one being shut. The Society did not put in an appearance at the hospital until Sunday, and even then were of no use.* "On Friday and Saturday, when the wounded men needed the greatest attention, the Society was simply not to be found, and a few European ladies very kindly came forward as nurses. . . . The patriotic Siamese Red Cross Society did not even take the trouble to inquire where the wounded men were. . . . No orders appear to have been issued from the Siamese Medical Department, which seems to have been perfectly paralysed. Europeans fought the forts, gunboats, and mines, and Europeans nursed, cured, carved, and attended the Siamese wounded. We beg the Siamese to remember this when next they dream of dispensing with the services of Europeans."

As the war-fever still continued, 200 men were sent to Battambong, for further hostilities on the Mekong; and when the King's brother, the Commissioner at Bassac, telegraphed to Bangkok for reinforcements, Prince Prachak, the Commissioner at Nong Kai, was at once ordered to send on what men he could spare. In vain did England endeavour to bring a pacificatory tone into Siamese counsels. On June 5th Lord Rosebery telegraphed to Captain Jones, "You should use your influence to restrain the Siamese Government from taking any measures likely to bring the dispute with France to a crisis. We are doing what is in our power here to urge upon them the necessity of moderation." But "it is ill work advising a fool," and Lord Rosebery must have smiled grimly on receiving the next day Captain Jones's telegram I have before quoted, beginning as

* As a matter of fact when the two Siamese ladies did come, they merely criticised the treatment adopted by the Surgeon of H.M.S. *Swift*, who had very kindly given his assistance, and spoke in a very high-handed manner of the insolence of the *farangs* in having thus interfered with the prerogatives of the Siamese Red Cross Society; but they left without doing anything whatever themselves.

follows:—"Your Lordship's telegram of yesterday. Siamese Government consider that the capture of the French officer referred to was justified by the circumstances. He committed an act of war, being in command of a hostile and aggressive expedition upon Siamese territory."

At the end of June the King went down in his new yacht to stay for several days at Paknam, so that he could make constant inspections of the work at the forts, and hasten it by his presence. It is true that the work was merely the piling up of earth and bricks, and the inspection both of His Majesty and of the Cabinet was of course entirely without technical knowledge or value. But so feverish was the activity that the whole supply of bricks in Siam was exhausted. On June 19th, His Majesty gave a banquet at Paknam to the principal Princes and officials, and several "patriotic" speeches were made. His Majesty's words were particularly strong, and he ended by saying, "I now desire to inform you all that if anything happens I shall not have the least fear, nor will I tamely submit to circumstances. I ask you one and all to be confident and to feel assured that we shall support each other and defend our country to the utmost of our power and ability." And Commodore de Richelieu and several Princes made speeches in the same tone. No wonder that the more sensible of the Bangkok newspapers published the following comment next day:—

"It is manifest that the King of Siam labours under the conviction that everything is in readiness; that his troops and defences are in excellent order and condition; and that the men in command are thoroughly capable and competent. . . . How far this is an empty dream we all know well. . . . But the King of Siam is surrounded by a charmed circle of his own creation. . . . We can and do expect every single European in Siamese employ, civil or so-called military, when asked for advice to point out to the Siamese most emphatically and unequivocally the madness of this resistance."

Meanwhile the Siamese Minister of Public Works sent a special written order to every pilot forbidding them "to pilot any French man-of-war over the bar into the river," without special orders from Bangkok. When this fact was accidentally

published, the usual policy of duplicity brought forth an immediate denial of it in the Siamese Government organ, the *Bangkok Times*. But the immediate publication of the original document in the other Bangkok newspaper, the *Siam Free Press*, showed the falsity of the Government position in attempting to gloss over their unwise and—in the light of the Treaties—illegal act. At the same time hurried steps were taken for effectually closing the river mouth. Piles and stakes were driven in, near the bar, to narrow the passage. But they were so badly placed that they waved about with the wind and tide, and would hardly have delayed a fishing boat. Two large steamers were sunk so as almost to close the main channel, but so badly ballasted and unskilfully moored, that they soon swung with the tide and lay in the wrong direction. A third hulk was prepared for sinking in the one remaining channel, and lay close by (but without any ballast ready for her) in nominal readiness for completely closing up the entrance at the last moment.

These new steps were taken in response to the receipt of a warning from the French Government on June 23rd, to the effect that "the French fleet had been ordered to proceed to Saigon, and, should the situation demand, it would be sent to Bangkok." This grave announcement should have made even the maddest adviser pause to consider the probable results of Siamese infatuation. Whatever the facts or the rights of the case might be, France was determined to have her way; she had taken her stand on a few main issues, and would brook no abatement. This is clearly stated in Mr. Phipp's despatch to Lord Rosebery of June 30th:—

"M. Develle this evening . . . said that he could give me a solemn assurance that the French Government had no idea of interfering with the integrity of the Siamese Empire. But France had three grievances which must be redressed. About six months ago the property, valued at about 80,000 francs, of a French merchant had been seized and sold. A French factory had also been destroyed, and finally Captain Thoreux had been captured by the Siamese, and had not been given up, in spite of repeated promises made during the last five weeks. There was

also the murder of M. Grosgurin, committed by a Siamese Mandarin, for which his Government must be held responsible. Only a few days ago His Excellency had told the Siamese Representative that if the fresh promises were broken and these grievances were not redressed, the French Minister would be withdrawn from Bangkok, when Prince Vadhana would receive his passports. . . . If Captain Thoreux were not given up, and any further attempts made to temporise, *France would have to get redress by arms.*"

What could Siam be thinking about, one may well ask, and what were her European advisers about, to let her adopt such a suicidal attitude and prate of resistance without either possessing or taking measures to acquire the decent beginnings of an armed force? This is an interesting point which has been but little understood in England, and deserves, I think, a few words of explanation.

There were at this time only three Europeans who possessed in any sense the confidence of the Cabinet or of the King. These were, first, an Englishman, Mr. Morant, who, taking the common-sense view about counting the cost, naturally advised coming to terms; but he was helpless to stem the torrent of anti-French feeling; his pacificatory advice was too unpalatable to be followed, since it clashed with the ingrained national conceit. Second, a Dane, Commodore de Richelieu, whose whole interest and excitement naturally lay in the chance of the prestige to be obtained by bringing his naval "properties" on the stage and possibly effecting a great *coup*. Third, a Belgian, M. Rolin Jacquemyns, whose advice and attitude on Siamese policy were, in my opinion, so unfortunate from beginning to end, that it will be worth while to stay a moment to describe his position in the Siamese service, as it had a material effect on the situation both then and afterwards. M. Jacquemyns has a distinguished European reputation for his knowledge of international law. When Prince Damrong during his tour in Egypt met this gentleman and sent word to Bangkok that he was open to an appointment, the possession of a man of such European repute struck the Siamese as a possible basis for a magnificent advertisement. To be able to speak of him as

their "Legal Adviser" would be a means of dazzling the European governments and throwing dust in the eyes of too closely critical *farang* observers. He was therefore engaged at a very high salary, and with a great amount of palaver installed in a villa some four miles away from the Palace, where he would be sufficiently conspicuous as a figure-head, but so far from Court circles that he could not become too pressing with his bodily presence or advice. For about eight months he went through the usual experience of every European employed in Siamese service; his advice, frequently proffered and at first blandly received, was soon deftly avoided, and never at any time followed, while he was treated with every consideration and courtesy, and his natural but futile eagerness for some work to do was kept soothed by an occasional decoration. At last by special decree he was given the wonderful "style" of "General Adviser and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Government of His Supreme Majesty the King of Siam," a title which he always inscribed on his cards, and of which a special Royal proclamation was made in the newspapers. After throwing him this gigantic sop, no further scruples were felt about ignoring his advice and keeping him on the shelf, and so little consideration was shown him that he could not even obtain a clerk, a secretary, or a proper office. From his appointment to the present time he has known scarcely two words of the language and seen nothing of the real life of the King, the Princes, the Ministers, or the officials; and has been kept as ignorant of the real state of the Siamese army and navy as of her finances and judiciary. But to every man comes his chance, and—though Siam's International Court which M. Jacquemyns might have put straight (if he had only been given the opportunity) is as rotten as ever, and her financial system which he might have improved (if he had been consulted about it) is as corrupt as ever—in her foreign politics he has undoubtedly had a striking influence.

To the national feeling so strongly aroused amongst the

Siamese by the advance of the French upon territory then under Siamese occupation, M. Jacquemyns' welcome theories of "National Rights"—expressed in high-sounding phrases and supported by volumes published in all the languages of Europe —were received with avidity; Siam was charmed to hear her own employee speak so bravely of her inherent rights as an independent nation to the continuance of her integrity and the full exercise of autonomy. M. Jacquemyns as a theorist was not concerned with mere practical details of undisciplined armies and sham navies. If international law declared the rights of a people to their own territory, it was clear to him that Siam must remember and insist upon these rights; and Siam heard him with delight, and responded with eagerness. In his defence it is but fair to repeat that he had undoubtedly been kept in perfect ignorance of the real state of the Siamese forces and other means of defence; so that the subsequent results of his advice came as an immense surprise to him, as was comically visible on July 14th, when he found that the two small French wooden gunboats had easily come up to Bangkok, in spite of the Siamese men-of-war which he had been assured would certainly blow them to atoms.

In this way foreign theories supported native conceit, Belgian advice jumped with Siamese inclinations, and Danish promptings appealed to Royal ambition. With ridiculous defences, useless weapons, and incompetent leaders, Siam rushed to her ruin.

The next stage in this tragi-comedy was the announcement made by M. Pavie to Prince Devawongse on July 10th that the French cruiser *Inconstant* and the gunboat *Comète* were about to arrive; and that, in accordance with the Treaty, Admiral Humann had ordered them to cross the bar on the evening of Thursday the 13th, for which purpose he requested the usual service of pilots. To this definite announcement Prince Devawongse, under M. Jacquemyns' advice, gave the following two-fold reply, which was the prime cause of all the subsequent disasters:—(1) That the reasons advanced by France for sending these boats

were neither valid, nor founded on facts; (2) that the Siamese Government objected "to an interpretation of the Treaty which would give to any Power an absolute right to send into the territorial waters of Siam, and to the Capital of the kingdom, as many war-vessels as they should like. The spirit of the Treaty cannot be that Siam should be deprived of the natural right of any nation to protect itself, and the French Government will easily understand that, under present circumstances, we cannot, without abdicating our right to exist as an independent State, adopt such interpretation." To this M. Pavie replied next day, "I have not failed to inform my Government and the Admiral of the objections made by the Government of His Majesty to their entry into the river. . . . I have equally made known that I have insisted with your Highness that the *Inconstant* whilst waiting a reply, *anchors at Paknam* conformably to the Treaty."

Prince Devawongse in turn replied, "To avoid any misunderstanding . . . I feel obliged to state without any delay . . . that my objections against the *Inconstant* passing the bar are of a general nature, and apply to its anchoring at Paknam as well as its going up to Bangkok. . . . Indeed the reasonable interpretation which, I think, ought to be given to the Treaty, as not depriving Siam of the essential right of any State to watch over its own safety and independence, is applicable to any part of our territorial waters."

The point here at issue is a vital one in any consideration of the Franco-Siamese difficulty. It illustrates perfectly the sophisms with which Siam on this as on other occasions sought to evade her treaty obligations; and it shows how inevitable and indeed justifiable were the steps to which France resorted to maintain her bare Treaty rights; and how easily she gained additional excuses for insisting on her later and more questionable territorial claims. Article XV. of the Treaty of 1856 between France and Siam reads as follows:—"French vessels of war can enter the river and anchor at Paknam; but they must inform the Siamese authorities before proceeding to Bangkok,

and come to an understanding with them as to the anchorage." It thus seems almost incredible that Prince Devawongse with M. Jacquemyns' advice should have ventured to reply to a naval power like France in the words I have above quoted, to maintain the same position again in a long interview, and to repeat it once more in the following uncompromising terms on July 12th: "Notwithstanding your insistence, in our interview of to-day, on having the *Inconstant* and the *Comète* admitted to anchor at Paknam, it is my duty to maintain my peremptory objections, which I made in my preceding letter, against their entering the waters of the Menam, and to declare that, under present circumstances, the Government of His Majesty is unable to consent to the presence in this river of more than one war-vessel of any State. All necessary instructions to that effect have been given to our naval and military authorities."

This was no hasty and unconsidered decision reached in a moment of excitement; nor was it merely due to some "misunderstanding," as the Siamese Government tried to make out in the Royal Proclamation of July 15th. Still less was it true that "the cause of the encounter at Paknam might have been the difficulties of communication with the (Siamese) officers," as was speciously suggested to Lord Rosebery, after the event, by the Siamese Legation in London. It was the deliberate decision of the Siamese Cabinet to disregard their plain obligations under the treaty, on discovering that it did not quite suit their convenience to fulfil them. But what had caused this particular inconvenience? Their own folly in having built their forts *outside* Paknam to command only the approach to the bar, while they had omitted any means of attacking ships lying at anchor *inside* the bar at Paknam, to which spot foreign vessels were free to come under the terms of the treaty. The ancient fort at this spot had been allowed to fall into ruins and is filled with jungle growth. Thus if the Siamese Government kept their Treaty promises, the French gunboats would be able to come unhurt inside the river and lie at Paknam out of reach of the

only big guns that Siam possessed. What then could be more simple than to say that in making those promises in 1856, they had never really intended to sanction the entrance of foreign gunboats? If a promise becomes inconvenient, explain it away; if this be impossible, then break it. So, when these unaccommodating Frenchmen declined to have their treaty rights explained away in this convenient fashion, Siam with a light heart decided to "insist." It is confidently believed now that the French ships only intended to make a demonstration by lying at anchor at Paknam, thirty miles away from the capital, as they were entitled by treaty to do, and their subsequent advance up to Bangkok was occasioned by the deliberate attack made upon them by the Siamese forts, while they were still within the limits assigned to them by the existing treaty.

It is true that the French Government in Paris consented at the last moment to waive their rights to anchor gunboats inside the bar at Paknam; and M. Develle informed Mr. Phipps on the afternoon of July 13th (Blue Book, No. 139), that "it had been decided that such French ships as would be sent would remain outside the bar . . . although . . . the 15th Article of the Franco-Siamese Treaty of 1856 was explicit and allowed French ships to penetrate into the river as far as Paknam, and after previous warning to the Siamese Government to proceed to Bangkok." * But these new orders had only been sent to the French Admiral at Saigon on July 11th, from whence they had to be transmitted to the ships which were then in the Gulf of Siam; and this could not have been done by 5 p.m. on July 13th. The note which M. Pavie sent out to the Commander of the *Inconstant* at 4.45 p.m. (just before the entrance of the gunboats) no doubt informed him of the Siamese objections to his

* As a matter of fact, owing to the difference in longitude, the French ships had actually crossed the bar, engaged the forts, and entered the river, before M. Develle made this statement to Mr. Phipps; and by 5.30 on the same afternoon the news of this could well have reached Paris.

passage and of their determination to resist it, and possibly also of the statement made to him (M. Pavie) by Prince Devawongse that the Siamese Minister in Paris had been assured by M. Develle that the gunboats would not enter. Be that as it may, however, and though the action of the French officers, as Lord Rosebery said, appeared to be "uncontrollable and irresponsible," the fact that definite orders had been given in writing by the King, on the 13th, that his forts should fire upon the French gunboats directly they showed definite signs of attempting to cross the bar, proves that the King did not really expect that the French would waive their treaty rights, and also that Siam was absolutely determined in any case to use force to prevent an entrance.

Thus, on the evening of July 13th, towards dusk, occurred the battle of Paknam, which I have already described. Directly the French ships reached a certain point on the bar, Commodore de Richelieu fired a shot across their bows from his fort to warn them, and on their continued advance he opened fire with all his guns as fast as he could, and the Siamese boats inside the river joined in the attack. The French boats were not materially damaged, but several French soldiers were killed and wounded. Under these circumstances the French Commander, ignorant of how many more forts or attacks might be in readiness for him at Paknam, naturally did not stop there after his entrance, but went straight up to the French Legation, situated on the river about three miles below the Palace, while the Siamese ships followed some distance after him as best they could.*

So skilfully, however, had the Siamese previously contrived

* The obvious comment upon the discrepancy between the assurances of the French Government and the action of the French gunboats cannot be more suggestively made than in Lord Rosebery's words to Lord Dufferin on Sept. 5th: "However ill-advised and useless the resistance of the Siamese may have been, the responsibility for what followed rests primarily with the French officers, who so acted in flagrant opposition to the engagement made by the Representative of their Government, *and who, I observe, have been publicly noted for promotion in recognition of their conduct.*" This promotion is now an accomplished fact.

to represent the justice of their case, as regards the men-of-war not entering Paknam, that the sound of firing on the evening of the 13th, followed by the apparition of two French gunboats lying unhurt before the Legation, came as an immense shock of surprise to many Bangkok residents. At last the direful news reached the Court (Captain Jones himself, the British Minister, strange to say, going to the Palace about 9 p.m. to confirm it), and instantly the Palace was seething with excitement and crowded with anxious officials, frightened servants, and hurrying troops. In a moment the King and Cabinet had been brought to a fearful realisation of the results which their foolhardy policy might now bring upon them. From 8 p.m. onwards there were few in the Palace who hoped to escape alive that night; every one expected an immediate bombardment by the French Commander, who was enraged, it was said, at having been fired upon in the peaceful exercise of his treaty rights. For several hours the greatest alarm prevailed at the possibility of an immediate landing of French troops, or the looting and destruction of the Palace. Troops hurriedly massed together all unprepared, cavalry hurried out of their stables mingling with them in a dense crowd round the Palace walls, ancient field-pieces, each with its supply of old cannon-balls, jammed together along the Palace road, excited attendants in the Palace, frantically endeavouring to load rifles which they had never seen before—all offered a strange spectacle of helpless confusion, and a striking contrast to the recent boasts that Siam would easily sweep the "French brigands" into the sea. All this for two small wooden gunboats and some 220 men.

At first the Cabinet were fascinated by a plucky but wild idea (suggested by the Danish officers) of sending every available boat and gun and marine down the river in the dark, pell-mell, to smash up the three little gunboats as they lay off the French Legation; but either fear or common sense prevailed. After five hours of fearful tension, the excitement and alarm in the Palace was at last dispelled by the arrival of a letter from M.

Pavie to Prince Devawongse, which said that no attack on the town or the Palace had ever been contemplated or was even now intended; and that the French Minister would visit the Siamese Foreign Office the next morning to discuss the events of that night—an unspeakable relief for the moment, but an unpleasant experience to look forward to. The next morning, however, after various quaint remarks had been made by Prince Devawongse and M. Jacquemyns to the French commander, congratulating him on his gallant entrance, M. Pavie merely stated that instructions from Paris must be awaited. These instructions arrived on July 20th, and are quoted by Captain Jones as follows:—

The following ultimatum, which has to be accepted in forty-eight hours, has been presented by the French to the Siamese Government:—

1. Recognition of the rights of Cambodia and Annam to left bank of River Mekong and the islands.

2. The Siamese shall evacuate, within one month's time, any posts which are there held by them.

3. Satisfaction for the various acts of aggression against French ships and sailors in the River Menam and against French subjects in Siam.

4. Pecuniary indemnities to the families of the victims and punishment of the culprits.

5. For various damages inflicted on French subjects indemnities of 2,000,000 fr.

6. As a guarantee for the claims under clauses 4 and 5 the sum of 3,000,000 fr. in dollars shall be at once deposited, or, in default, the farming of the taxes of Siemrap and Battambong shall be assigned to the French.

In the event of the non-acceptance of these terms the French Minister will leave Bangkok and the blockade of the coast will at once take place.

Thus Siam's penalty for her few days of madness was prompt and pitiless. Great was the excitement during the two days of grace. It is difficult to understand that Siam had not even then learnt the lesson of submission; indeed the British Minister went about the town on the final day definitely stating that everything was satisfactorily settled, that no further penalties would be exacted, and no blockade need be feared. But he little knew the Siamese character; the national conceit had not even yet fully realised the helplessness of the situation. "On the Saturday afternoon, it became

evident that a hitch had occurred somewhere, and that matters were taking an unfavourable turn. The Naval Department had ordered every vessel capable of bearing a gun to be under steam, and the troops were ready for any sudden emergency."* And just before the time of grace expired, an answer was sent by Prince Devawongse to M. Pavie of which the following is an abstract:—

1. The King of Siam declares that no explicit definition has as yet ever been made to the Siamese Government as to what constitutes the rights of Cambodia and Annam on the Mekong. But as His Majesty is anxious at once to secure peace and security for his people he agrees to cede to France the country lying to the south of the 18th parallel of latitude and to the east of the Mekong.

2. The withdrawal of all Siamese posts within the above mentioned territory to take place forthwith.

3. The loss of life which has occurred in the recent actions between the French and the Siamese forces is regretted by the King, and the satisfaction required by France will be given in accordance with ordinary justice and the independence of Siam which the French Government affect to respect.

4. Those found guilty of illegal aggression will receive condign punishment, and the sufferers will receive due reparation.

5. The King agrees to pay the indemnity demanded on account of the claims advanced by French subjects, although the justice of many of them has been denied by the Siamese. His Majesty, however, suggests that a Joint Commission should first investigate these claims.

6. The sum of 3,000,000 fr. required as guarantee will be deposited concurrently with the exchange of notes between the Representatives of France and Siam. After the equitable adjustment of all reasonable claims, the King trusts that French justice will restore to Siam any sum which may remain over.

This compliance with the demands of France will, the King trusts, be looked upon as a proof of his sincere desire to live with the French Republic on terms of friendship.

But this "compliance" produced next day the following reply from M. Pavie to Prince Devawongse:—

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of the reply your Excellency, on behalf of the Government of His Majesty the King of Siam, has made to the communication which I left with you on behalf of the Government of the French Republic. I have taken act of this reply, and without entering upon a discussion of any of the points I note that it involves a refusal of a considerable portion of the left bank of the Mekong. . . . I have the honour to inform your Highness that, in conformity with the instructions of my Government, I am transferring the protection of French nationals and protected persons to the Netherlands Consul-General, and I embark on the *Inconstant*, leaving 26th July.

* *Siam Free Press.*

To this startling announcement Prince Devawongse sent next day a formal reply to express his regret and surprise at this unexpected decision, and to say that no alteration in his previous note could yet be made, as he must first "*insist* for a definition of the nature and extent of what you call the rights of Annam and Cambodia on the left bank of the Mekong." Siam thus still continued to "insist," with three French gunboats in the river, several more outside the bar, her forces ludicrously defeated, and not the slightest hope of foreign aid!

On Monday the 24th the French Minister did not hoist his flag at the Legation, and in the afternoon of the 25th (the tide did not serve before) he left Bangkok, with all the French warships, and settled at the island of Koh-si-chang, pending further instructions from France. The penalties of Siamese folly were soon to be enforced. On the 28th, notice was given by Admiral Humann, who had just arrived from Saigon, that a strict blockade would commence on July 29th, and now British merchants began to realise that it was they who were to suffer for Siamese folly. Yet still war counsels prevailed. At one moment it was actually decided to completely close the passage of the river by permanently blocking up the channel with hulks; and every possible preparation for war was debated.

Fortunately Prince Devawongse was at last persuaded by the plain revelation of some startling facts about the conditions of the forts and the ships, to realise the hopelessness of further resistance; and he determined to surrender unconditionally before worse things should happen. He contrived to evade any discussion of his decision in the quarrelling Cabinet, to escape any more theories of "natural rights," and to frighten the King into submission. His decision was no doubt vastly assisted by the final crushing of all hopes of British interference and aid, as conveyed to him by Captain Jones in Lord Rosebery's words:—

"The nature of the advice which I have given to the Siamese Government has been constant and consistent in the sense that they should come to terms with the French quickly. It is impossible for Her Majesty's Government now to change this view, or indeed to intervene with advice at this juncture.

"The result of the inquiries that I have been able to make at Paris shows that the tendency of the demands of the French is to increase, and rapidly so, if the Siamese continue to resist the conditions laid down in their ultimatum.

"I am unable to see, under these circumstances, what Siam can hope to gain from maintaining her refusal to accept these conditions, nor what better course remains for her than to accept the French terms at once and unconditionally.

"The engagements entered into by the Siamese Government with Her Majesty's Government in regard to Kyang Chiang need not deter the Siamese Government from this course. The question as to the future status of that province must be discussed directly between Her Majesty's Government and that of France."

The pregnant sentence in the closing paragraph showed them that the last card they had tried to play, in endeavouring to entangle England in the quarrel and so enforce British interference, had completely failed. A note was therefore sent to M. Pavie at Koh-si-chang by Prince Devawongse on the 29th of July, to say that, "His Majesty the King of Siam, being actuated by the most friendly feeling towards France, accepts the demands of the Government of the Republic unconditionally." But the French had now learned wisdom, and discovered the value of Siamese promises to keep any conditions or to fulfil the terms of a treaty; and they therefore very naturally required guarantees, viz.:—

1. The occupation by French troops of the river and fort of Chantaboon pending the evacuation by Siam of the left bank of Mekong.
2. No Siamese troops to be permitted within twenty-five kilometres of the Mekong River.
3. No Siamese armed vessels to be stationed on Toulesap Lake.
4. The right to establish Consulates at Nan and Korat reserved by France.

The occupation of Chantabun by French troops was a bitter pill; for it would be a patent and enduring proof that the King of Siam was no longer absolute in his own kingdom, but lay at the mercy of France. However there was no help for it. England still declined to help. Lord Rosebery telegraphed again to Captain Jones on July 31st, "In order that the French

should have no further opportunity for action or territorial requisition, it is obvious that the Siamese should not hesitate to yield." And so the ultimatum with all its additions was finally accepted. On August 3rd, the blockade was raised, and on August 7th, the French Minister returned to Bangkok and again raised his flag, to the salutes of the Siamese Navy.

It only remained to arrange the details of future relationship, and this task was entrusted to a special Minister Plenipotentiary, sent from France for the purpose, M. Le Myre de Vilers, who was formerly Governor of Cochin-China and is now dictating French terms in Madagascar. He arrived in Bangkok on August 16th, and soon showed that he possessed considerable firmness, and a clear knowledge of the situation.

The King had retired to his Summer Palace some sixty miles up the river, in a state of mental collapse, almost directly after the final surrender had been made and the acute crisis had passed. But M. de Vilers knew that the native mind would try hard to gloss over the dictatory position of the French Envoy and represent it as an Embassy for petitioning the King. He therefore refused to have audience at the summer residence, and insisted that, as the Envoy of France, he must be received with full honours in the Royal Palace at Bangkok. This meant that the King must come down to the capital for the purpose—another bitter pill for the monarch of an independent kingdom. The Siamese saw that they must assent; but, cunning to the last, they cleverly contrived to cover the humiliation by contriving that there should be a Court function in Bangkok requiring the King's presence on the morning of August 20th. The King was obliged to come down for this function, and was thus also at the same time "pleased to be able to grant M. de Vilers an audience in the Grand Palace at Bangkok in the afternoon of August 20th."

The second point in which M. de Vilers showed his keen knowledge of the situation was in refusing to recognise M. Jacquemyns officially, or to allow him to be present at the

negociations. This action was somewhat objected to at the time by the British Government as apparently an infringement of Siamese independence. But it was probably the only way in which any finality could be hoped for from the Conferences. One definite stage of progress was soon reached—the easiest so far as Siam was concerned, since it involved merely a pecuniary loss, which the immense stores of money lying idle in the Palace enabled her to meet without any difficulty. On August 22nd, two and a half million francs (in silver dollars) were handed to the French Legation in Bangkok, and another half million were paid by cheque on Saigon.

But still the difficulties and procrastinations in the negociations were extraordinary. M. Develle had informed Lord Rosebery on September 14th, that the "negociations ought not to take more than a week or at most a fortnight," whereas the Siamese contrived to prolong them for six weeks. After a few visits had been exchanged, which had only resulted in useless discussions on the draft Treaty, Prince Devawongse went up to see the King at the summer residence during the first week in September, and finding the state of things there to be hopeless, he retired to his own house immediately on his return to Bangkok for nearly three weeks on the plea of dysentery; and things were once more at a deadlock. The whole Court was up at Bang-pa-in, engaged in processions, pageants, illuminations, and theatres, in honour of a new white elephant, and of the King's fortieth birthday. Some seven thousand persons were packed into the Palace grounds, the King taking close interest in the long processions, paper lanterns, and gaudy shows, while the Envoy of France was waiting to settle the fate of the country. M. de Vilers was thus left with nothing to do, and ominous rumours of increased French demands soon raised a general scare for Siam's independence. Prince Devawongse did not resume negociations till September 26th, and even then the most preposterous arguments were advanced, and the situation was rapidly becoming desperate again. At length M. de Vilers

naturally lost patience, and the French Government in Paris began to grow peremptory. When he next went to the Siamese Foreign Office on September 27th, he listened quietly to a long rigmarole of objections, arguments and prevarications, and then simply placed in Prince Devawongse's hands a Convention, drawn up by the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris, embodying "a final statement of all the alterations and conditions that France was prepared to accord," observing, "I leave Siam within four days, whether these conditions be accepted or not; and I shall come here again on Sunday, October 1st, to hear your decision. The Treaty can afford to wait, but there must be no delay as regards the Convention." Thus for the third time a crisis was imminent; the Siamese still declined to give way, and things looked as if the last great disaster must come. The gun-boat *Aspic* had her steam up early on Sunday morning, and a pilot on board, ready to leave at a moment's notice. However, at the last moment, the terms were agreed to unconditionally, and the Siamese Foreign Minister and the French Minister Plenipotentiary, on October 3rd, duly signed the Treaty and Convention, a *procès verbal* being added to explain matters of doubt. The terms agreed upon, it should be added, contain several points which—taken in connection with the ultimatum, the occupation of Chantabun, and the various possibilities that lie in the next Treaty still to be drawn up between France and Siam—suggest many serious considerations regarding the future of Siam and the crucial question of English interests and trade generally in Indo-China.

I have now given the true story of French action in Siam in 1893. What is the net result? In five months France has obtained from Siam three million francs. She has deprived Siam for ever of the means of defending her eastern frontier, of resisting any further encroachments there, and of keeping in order those parts of her territory which border on French possessions. She has obtained specific commercial and other

advantages for French subjects in Siam. She has annexed some fifty thousand square miles of territory which had been recognised as Siamese, and occupied by Siamese posts, during the past eighty years at least. And finally, she still retains a military occupation of Chantabun, the second great port of Siam, commanding the Gulf of Siam and also the entrance to the three richest provinces, the time-limit of this occupation being worded in the vaguest possible terms. What the future will bring it is impossible to say, but I fear it must be regarded as certain that the question of Siam will again be the subject of grave discussion between the Governments of Great Britain and France. It is for this reason alone that I have felt compelled to give so long and unsparing an account of last year's events. In all European quarters the actions and position of the Siamese in the matter have hitherto been misunderstood and misrepresented, and I am convinced that nothing but an accurate insight into the realities of the past can supply the means of preventing vastly greater and more far-reaching evils in the future.

CHAPTER XXX.

ENGLAND AND THE FUTURE OF SIAM.

IN the previous chapter I confined myself to a simple and impartial narrative of the events which took place during the Franco-Siamese difficulty between March and October, 1893. Out of these events have grown several grave questions, three of which are matters of special importance to England. These are—(1) the frontier defence of our Indian Empire on its eastern boundary over some 300 miles; (2) the commercial interests of England in Indo-China; and (3) the probable extinction of Siamese independence.

In order to understand the more pressing questions of frontier delimitation and territorial acquisition in Indo-China, and especially on the Upper Mekong, some of the geographical features of the country must be clearly grasped. The River Mekong, or Lan Tsung Kiang as the Chinese call it, rises in the mountains of Thibet, and in its earlier course flows due south, parallel with the Salween on the west and the Yangtze on the east. On entering the province of Yunnan, the Yangtze goes off to the eastwards through some of the richest provinces of China; while the Salween and the Mekong pursue parallel courses, at a comparatively small distance apart, for some hundreds of miles towards the south. The Salween ultimately flows out through Burmah into the Indian Ocean, while the Mekong does not enter Burmah proper, but passes through the Shan States, and on reaching latitude 20°, takes a sharp bend to the east for some 120 miles, and after again turning due south at Luang Prabang

for about 160 miles, makes precisely a similar turn to the east at latitude 18°. After keeping this easterly course for some 150 miles, it resumes its southerly course, and skirting the whole length of Siam, finds its way into the China Sea through the French protected kingdom of Cambodia.

It must always be remembered that the chief factor in the commercial politics of the Far East is the trade of China. To tap the markets and develop the resources of the interior of that great country has long been the keenest ambition alike of England and France. Yunnan, Szechuan, and Kweichau, the great provinces of south-western China, are the special objects in view at present. The political rivalries of England and France in Indo-China during the last two decades may practically be summed up in one phrase as a race for Yunnan. When France seized Tongking she hoped to win her way to this great potential wealth by means of the Red River, which it was hoped would bring Yunnan into direct communication with the newly-created French Colonial Empire; and the founding of her colony at Saigon was no doubt also intended to achieve the same end, by obtaining possession of the mouths of the great Mekong River. England on her part had by the annexation of Upper Burmah made herself actually conterminous with these provinces of China; she had gained control over the whole of the Salween River, and over a certain portion of the Mekong River also, and she held the numerous passes adjacent to these great waterways, both of which actually penetrate into Yunnan itself.

This in 1892 was the position of the two rival competitors in the race for Yunnan. A few further geographical details are necessary to explain the origin of those acute difficulties between England and France in 1893, which so nearly led to a complete rupture. The annexation of Upper Burmah had given to England definite territorial rights over certain Shan States lying between Siam and China, and astride of the Mekong. With a view of contriving a scientific frontier on the north-east boundary of her Indian Empire, and of avoiding any possibility

on being "limitrophe" with France, the British Government had contemplated the cession of these rights to either China or Siam. The northernmost of these particular Shan States—that is, the one next to China—is commonly called Chieng Hung (Kyaing Hung—Chê-li in Chinese); that on the south—next to Siam—being known as Chieng Kheng (Kyaing Chaing). The question at issue in 1893 was no new one. The Anglo-Siamese Boundary Commission had been working for some years past to fix the frontier between Burmah and Siam, and by 1893 it had completed the delimitation practically as far as the Mekong, as will be seen on reference to my map. The State of Chieng Kheng was then handed over to Siam by England, with the express stipulation that English rights to it, as regards both sides of the Mekong, would revive, should Siam at any time abandon it.* Chieng Hung, on the other hand, which is just north of Chieng Kheng, has now been ceded by England to China, in connection with the Anglo-Chinese Boundary Commission which has also been working for some time past,† with the same stipulation of England's reversionary rights. Under these circumstances it was but natural that England should begin to feel some anxiety last year when it became apparent that the French advance towards Siam westwards from Tongking and Annam was not to be limited to the region of the Lower Mekong—where it did not touch our possessions or interests in any way—but was directed equally to the upper reaches of the river, and was in fact, however much this might be concealed by diplomacy, primarily directed at the possession of the whole of this great waterway from Saigon to Yunnan.

By July, 1893, the matter admitted of no further doubt, and demanded immediate attention. The French ultimatum to Siam (the history of which is given in the preceding chapter) was peremptory, and demanded the surrender of territory nearly

* Siam, No. 1 (1894), No. 30.

† The French Government are believed to have raised objections to this arrangement; and the questions involved are likely to be very difficult of solution, for reasons which I shall presently endeavour to explain.

100,000 square miles in extent. It was impossible to mistake the trend of events, for M. Develle openly showed his indignation at Siam's refusal to recognise any French rights above latitude 18° on the left bank of the Mekong. At the same time the French Chamber began to speak confidently of French rights on the Mekong as extending continuously up to 23°. At this point England saw it was time to enter her protest, unless the case were to be allowed to go entirely by default. Indeed, even China awoke from her lethargy, and suggested to the French Government that some mistake must have been made, since Chinese territorial rights existed on the east bank of the Mekong for a considerable distance south of 23°. England in her turn sent a plain reminder of the actual extent of British rights in the same regions, and a warning that she could not permit any infringement thereof. Lord Rosebery explained to Lord Dufferin the views of the British Government as follows :—

"We cannot doubt that the term 'left bank' is far too comprehensive in its scope. It cannot of course apply to any districts east of the Mekong River which the Siamese Government have no power to cede, whether from rights of sovereignty, suzerainty, or reversion possessed by other Powers. And secondly, we are confident that the expression 'left bank of the Mekong' is used subject to the assurances repeatedly given by the French Government that they would respect the independence and integrity of the Kingdom of Siam. It is clear that any provinces which indisputably form part of that Monarchy could not properly be made the subject of any such demands by the French Government."

On July 23rd, Lord Dufferin put the matter quite tersely and clearly to M. Develle. He supposed that "in using the term 'the left bank of the Mekong' his Excellency could not have intended to claim for France the immense tracts of Siamese territory extending not to the east and abutting upon Annam, but to the northwards of the Upper Mekong, and conterminous with China, not to mention the districts lying beyond, which had been incorporated with Her Majesty's Empire of India after the conquest of Burmah." But M. Develle in his reply would not definitely state what the limits of the French claim were, and Lord Dufferin was therefore compelled to press his unwel-

come inquiries a little further, and ask whether "the extensive territories (near the two elbows of the Mekong at 18° and 20° respectively) between the Mekong and the actual French boundary depicted upon the existing French maps, comprising the principality of Luang Prabang and other districts, were also claimed by France?" This compelled M. Develle to declare himself, and the truth about French aims was at last partially disclosed by the astonishing statement that "France claimed a right to Luang Prabang and the adjacent countries as being ancient and historic dependencies of Annam; and that furthermore she had always insisted that her territorial sovereignty extended all along the left bank of the Mekong."

The French Government thus admitted at last that its claims about historic suzerainty and the like had undergone a remarkable extension during four years. In 1889 she disavowed any claim to Luang Prabang: in 1893 she "had always insisted on it"! This is proved by Lord Salisbury's despatch of April 3, 1889, where he quotes M. Waddington as having made the following statement:—

"The French Government did not wish to extend the frontier of Cochin China to Luang Prabang, but they would propose to draw a line from a point nearly due east of that place southwards to the Mekong, and below that point to make the river the dividing line between the two countries until it entered the territory of Cambodia."

And, to anticipate for a moment, Lord Rosebery met M. Develle's new claim for France by the following conclusive argument addressed to Lord Dufferin on Sept. 2, 1893:—

"It was at least certain that the State of Luang Prabang had for a period of over seventy years acknowledged Siamese suzerainty, and that it had for some years been practically under the control of a Siamese Commissioner. The French Government had, moreover, themselves acknowledged the sovereignty of Siam at Luang Prabang by the signature of the Convention of the 7th of May, 1886, which provides for the appointment of a French Vice-Consul there, and by the request which they subsequently addressed to the Siamese Government to grant an exequatur to the officer so appointed. It is further an undoubted fact that the country to the west of the Nam U up to latitude 22° has for some time been in Siamese possession, that the Siamese military posts extend along the course of that river up to that latitude, and that the Siamese Province of Maung Nan reaches some

60 miles to the north of the Mekong, where that river runs westerly from the town of Luang Prabang.

"There was therefore to the east of the British possessions, where they approach or touch the Upper Mekong, a broad tract of territory generally admitted by French as well as by other explorers and travellers to belong to Siam. Moreover, on the French official map of Indo-China, published by the Ministry of War in 1886, there is a distinct frontier line drawn considerably to the east of the Nam U, and described as 'the frontier of Annam according to the Annamite maps'; while the country to the west of this line is stated to belong to States under the suzerainty of Burmah and Siam."

France, however, had taken up her position, and was determined not to be stopped by either argument or interference from England. Finding, therefore, that M. Develle still insisted on his policy, Lord Dufferin proceeded in his turn to—

"insist on the incompatibility of this confiscation by France of so considerable a proportion of the Kingdom of Siam with M. Develle's and the French Government's previous assurances that they had no intention to allow their disputes with Siam on the Lower Mekong to entail any measures which would jeopardise her integrity or her independence. How could these professions, I asked, which I knew had been made in perfect sincerity, be reconciled with this slicing off of what amounted to nearly a third of the kingdom?"

M. Develle, however, refused to budge. In vain Lord Dufferin pointed out that this step "would bring France into direct contiguity with Burmah, . . . and that the approach of a great military Power like France to a frontier at present lying naked to attack could not be regarded by us with indifference." Moreover, he impressed upon M. Develle "the extreme gravity which the situation might assume were the French demands to be pressed upon Siam beyond what was just and reasonable, and in conformity with the legitimate interests of other Powers." And that "such a transformation of the French pretensions was undoubtedly calculated to excite alarm in England, and the most serious apprehensions in the mind of Her Majesty's Government."

M. Develle's only reply was that "the terms of the first Article of his ultimatum *having been published to the world*, and all France being acquainted with them, he could not now alter them, especially under manifest pressure from us"! But he

seems to have realised that a less uncompromising attitude would perhaps be advisable, so he consented to consider whether any arrangements could be made for "leaving a 'buffer' between the Asiatic possessions of France and England, and thus leave the door open for future negociations." With this very small concession the Foreign Office was content. Thus the crisis passed, and the hatchet was buried for a time. A striking light, however, is thrown upon the real nature of the relative positions of France and England on this question, by a remark made by M. Develle during this same conversation, that the injury which the French action was inflicting upon some 2½ millions sterling of English trade, was "merely an accident of the situation," and therefore could not be allowed to influence the solution of the question at all.

The British Foreign Office seems, however, to have taken heart of grace again after a few days of uncomfortable thought, and to have realised at last the importance of all that England was surrendering so tamely to France; for Lord Dufferin returned to the charge on July 26th, by these remarks to M. Develle:—

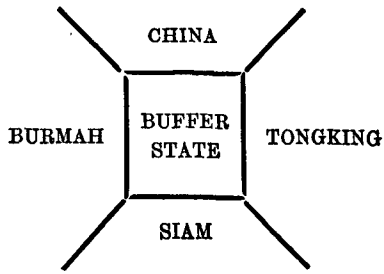
"It was true that within the last twelve months a mysterious revolution had occurred in the minds of French geographical authorities, but an honest man must be as convinced as I was that the district in question was, and had been for nearly a century, *bonâ fide* Siamese territory, and that it could not be confiscated by France without a flagrant infringement of the formal assurances he had given us not to impair the integrity of Siam. As for the pretension advanced by France *ab antiquo* to the left bank of the Mekong, such a supposition was not only contradicted by M. Waddington's express declarations on the subject, but by the further fact, that under the Franco-Siamese Convention of 1886 the French had claimed the right of sending a Vice-Consul to Luang Prabang, which in itself was an absolute proof that the locality belonged to Siam."

But it was a bark without any intention of a bite. And M. Develle clearly saw this, and promptly "put up the shutters on this compartment"—as Lord Dufferin himself phrases it—by curtly stating that it was impossible—"in the excited state of public opinion"—to withdraw or modify the terms of the ultimatum. Plainly, then, England must quietly acquiesce; if she would not bite she must not bark; and the matter was again allowed to pass.

Nothing was now left but to try and save that portion of the territory which more directly affected the policy and threatened the interests of India, since, as Lord Dufferin said, "it was quite out of the question that we should accept an arrangement which made France conterminous with our Indian Empire." So we find Lord Dufferin expressing to M. Develle the hope that France would consent to the formation of some buffer territory which would prevent the actual contact of England and France on the Indian frontier. Even to this, however, M. Develle's "cordial" assent was only given on condition that the boundary proposed by Lord Dufferin for this buffer State should be drawn much further westwards—in fact, on the watershed of the Nam U instead of the river itself—so as to leave much more territory to France; and that at the same time England should give up some of the territory on the Mekong which she had long been *occupying*, in return for this "sacrifice" by France of those new territories on the Mekong which she was just then *annexing*. This very one-sided bargain was finally embodied in a Protocol signed on July 31st by Lord Dufferin and M. Develle, arranging for the formation of a buffer State which should separate our respective frontiers; its boundaries were to be settled later, after a Survey Commission had provided the necessary geographical data. Still the discussion dragged on until December, when it was pointed out to the French Government that unless the Joint Commission started immediately it could not do so until December, 1894. All possible haste was promised, but the latter date proved after all to be that on which the Commissioners started for the remote scene of their labours.

The principle of a buffer State having been thus conceded, there still remained the exceedingly difficult question of fixing its limits, and determining what territory should be ceded respectively by France and England so as to give it the minimum width of 50 miles. The following rough diagram may serve to fix in the reader's mind the relative positions of

the different countries to be separated by this buffer State or neutral zone:—



A reference to the accompanying map will show that our surrender of Chieng Hung to China necessitates that the northern frontier of the buffer State should be the boundary between Chieng Hung and Chieng Kheng. Its eastern frontier may cause greater difficulty. England has already, on Lord Dufferin's confession, "voluntarily retired nearly 300 miles further west than she need have done, with a view of avoiding umbrage to France by too close an approach to her Indo-Chinese possessions." So that it seems hardly credible that we shall again consent to surrender our rights and retire still further westwards. Presumably, therefore, the eastern boundary of the buffer State will not be further westwards than the eastern frontier of Chieng Kheng, that is to say, the watershed of the Nam U. The western boundary also presents many difficult points for discussion. If the British Government gravely recognise the so-called French "sacrifice" of territorial rights westwards of the Nam U,* no doubt England will be expected to make "sacrifices" in return, and perhaps even to surrender her actual rights of occupation over territory to the west of the Mekong. It is to be hoped, however, that a solution more favourable to British interests may yet be obtained, as suggested in Lord Dufferin's letter of July 31st, which proposed that Eng-

* That these rights were quite fictitious has been already made clear from M. Waddington's statement, which I have quoted above.

land's "sacrifices" should be limited to the *trans*-Mekong (*i.e.*, eastern) portion of Chieng Kheng only; in which case the Mekong itself would be the western frontier of the buffer State. Its southern frontier would then be some line to be agreed upon by England and France which should delimit the territory of Siam; probably the already existing southern frontier of the Chieng Kheng State would answer the purpose.

In some such fashion as this, then, England and France are to avoid becoming actually "limitrophe" on the Indian frontier. What solid grounds exist for the realisation of this hope, or for the expectation of any permanence in such an arrangement, it is hard to see. Already the experts on this question—both English and French—speak of this whole buffer State affair with a smile. The proposed arrangement is in fact an entirely artificial and unnatural one, and I do not myself believe for a moment that anything will come of it. The crucial question of the government of the neutral zone has never been solved. No one has decided what available authority will be sufficient to prevent it from becoming a place of refuge for all the dacoits, escaped criminals, and insurrectionary elements, alike of China, of Burmah, and of Indo-China. A similar No Man's Land between China and Korea was thus populated, until Li Hung-chang annexed it. It has been gravely suggested that the government of the proposed zone should be handed over to China. One would certainly imagine that France's experience of China as a neighbour in Tongking would lead her to object very decidedly to such an arrangement, as being the most direct means of creating anarchy and disturbance. Moreover, the disorder in the Chinese Empire caused by the present war will assuredly lessen, if that were possible, the already slight hold which the central authorities in Peking with difficulty maintain over these distant Shan tribes; and the existence of a State in a condition of anarchy just between the frontiers of England and France would defeat the precise ends which a buffer State is supposed to subserve.

Even apart from these considerations, it is plain that the English and French Governments are by no means agreed as yet regarding the extent of their respective rights on the Mekong; and when the question comes up for actual settlement, after the Boundary Commissioners have produced the requisite geographical data, it is difficult to see what compromise can be arranged without very considerable concessions, and these made all on one side. The whole question, in fact, is only in its earliest stage; and other difficulties in Indo-China will undoubtedly again become acute before it approaches settlement. The points at issue will be directly between England and France; and as they will finally decide the handicaps in the international race for Yunnan, the question will be one of the gravest importance to our commercial and political interests.

To prove that I have not exaggerated the possibility of these difficulties, it is only necessary to read in the Blue Book the discussions that have already taken place between the English and French Governments on the subject. On October 25th, M. Develle had already begun to "despond about the buffer State negociations." He very cleverly complained that "by retaining the cis-Mekong part of Kyaing Chaing and assigning the other part to the buffer State we should be remaining on the Mekong ourselves while keeping France away." To this Lord Rosebery very pointedly replied that "as Kyaing Chaing was a State under our suzerainty, we were, in giving up the trans-Mekong part, making a considerable concession, and in retaining the cis-Mekong portion, only retaining what we already possessed." Indeed, matters had almost reached a deadlock so long ago as October 27, 1893, when it became necessary for Lord Rosebery to say very plainly that "should these negociations unfortunately fail, and should the French Government be unable to accept the above proposal (which is offered in the most conciliatory spirit), the British Government would have to take such measures as they might consider necessary for their own protection. These it is not necessary more particularly to define. . . . They

would also take into immediate consideration the measures necessary to preserve an independent State between the main body of the British dominions and those of France." This determined attitude, however, failed to settle the matter, and it again became necessary to use the same veiled threats, since on November 21st we find Lord Dufferin definitely stating that if the negociations could not be put through on the lines suggested, "we should be compelled to assert our domination over Kyaing Chaing and on *both* sides of the Mekong in a more active and effective manner than had hitherto been found necessary, for our position in India was such that anything approaching to disputed jurisdiction along our frontier could not be tolerated." In spite, however, of this peremptory tone, M. Develle replied with equal curtness that "the integrity of Luang Prabang was as valid and reasonable a cause of solicitude to France as the integrity of Kyaing Ton was to us: nor would the French Chamber nor French public opinion tolerate its disintegration." The acrimonious discussion was only terminated by a mutual decision to leave for a future date the crucial points of territorial concession on either side—that is, to throw the entire arrangement into the melting-pot. In fact, the whole discussion and the length of time before the buffer State Commissioners could get to work clearly shows that the question will raise innumerable difficulties when the time comes for its final settlement.

There is, moreover, another and a totally distinct frontier question in connection with France and Siam which is likely to develop considerable proportions in the future, and may possibly lead to a radical redistribution of the whole territory of Indo-China—I mean the designs which the French are well known to cherish upon the rich provinces near the great Lake of Cambodia, generally known as Battambong, Angkor, and Siemrap. M. de Lanessan, in his book that I have already quoted, stated these ambitions very distinctly: "From the Se-Moun our empire should cross the Mekong . . . and include the provinces of Battambong and Angkor (pp. 500, 501). . . . Having retaken

the Great Lake Provinces, which formerly were dependent on Cambodia, and the basins of the Mekong and the Se-Moun, we ought to make a point of respecting [!] and, if necessary, protecting, the independence of Siam (p. 470)." It is true that on July 23, 1893, M. Develle gave to Lord Dufferin a definite "assurance that there was no truth in the report that his Government had any intention of taking possession of the Siamese Provinces of Battambong and Angkor." But on April 3, 1889, M. Waddington had said exactly the same thing to Lord Salisbury with regard to Luang Prabang, and this had not prevented M. Develle, in July, 1893, from claiming Luang Prabang, and even declaring that France had always insisted on this right! In fact, so valueless was M. Waddington's undertaking in the eyes of the present French Government that they went so far as to annex Luang Prabang outright, and it is now French territory; and this, too, in the teeth of Lord Dufferin's remonstrances that this proceeding was "incompatible with the previous assurances of the French Foreign Office," and in spite of Lord Rosebery's insistence upon "the limits imposed by previous declarations of the French Government." It is only reasonable to suppose, therefore, since what has been done once may be done again, that the rich Lake Provinces of south-eastern Siam will go the way of Luang Prabang, if France can only again contrive to outwit the British Foreign Office in time, by once more producing an "excited state of public opinion" to support her. Confirmation of this gloomy view is found in the Blue Book (No. 211), where Lord Dufferin speaks of his suspicions that "M. Develle seemed anxious to found a right to a free hand in Battambong and Angkor;" these suspicions having been very naturally aroused in his Lordship's mind by a sinister suggestion contained in the ultimatum of July 20th, that France should farm the revenues of Battambong and Angkor in place of receiving the 3,000,000 frs. of indemnity So strong were Lord Dufferin's suspicions that he endeavoured to obtain an assurance from M. Develle that the annexation

of these provinces was not intended. His endeavour was a conspicuous failure, for the French Foreign Minister quietly ignored his own statement of July 23rd on this point (above quoted), and maintained that recent Siamese actions had been sufficient to "fully justify France in now taking whatever military or other measures she might deem expedient." However, when Siam finally accepted the ultimatum without reserve, the French colonial party lost their hopes of an immediate pretext for further annexation. But they were too keen to give up their aims lightly; and on July 29th M. Develle had a special interview with Lord Dufferin in order to suggest "some arrangement by which these provinces might be handed over to France in exchange for a portion of the Siamese territory in the north, recently surrendered under the terms of the ultimatum"! This time, however, Lord Dufferin was peremptory, and though M. Develle "deprecated what he evidently considered an unduly harsh remonstrance," said plainly that he "must decline to continue any discussion in the direction indicated, as any transaction of the kind would not only be a serious invasion of Siam, but would equally destroy her independence in view of the proximity of those provinces to Bangkok," and that "the absolute refusal which he then expressed to listen to any such ideas as those which M. Develle had mooted, represented the views of the British Government." Thus England for once had her way and these provinces were saved, for a time at all events, from French annexation. The question, however, came up yet again a few months later, when it became clear that M. le Myre de Vilers' negociations in Bangkok were aimed at acquiring some special control over these same provinces, so that Lord Rosebery was again obliged to remark very decidedly, on September 7th, that Siam's "rights to the provinces which remain to the west of the Mekong are indisputable, and could not be infringed without serious, perhaps fatal, injury to her integrity and independence;" and he even characterised M. le Myre de Vilers' proposal as "a grave blow at that integrity and independence

of the Siamese Kingdom which the French Government have so often and so specifically promised to respect," the maintenance of which is a "British interest of high importance," as had been "publicly announced in Parliament."

These peremptory objections of the British Government to further French encroachments on Siam (it seems a pity that Lord Rosebery had not possessed the necessary information to take the same highly desirable attitude four months previously, and so saved many thousands of square miles to Siam) greatly disgusted M. Develle, who "showed a strong desire to postpone entering upon the discussion of the buffer State." But, on September 9th, Lord Dufferin remorselessly reiterated his statement that "Clause No. 5 of the ultimatum seemed to have the appearance of incorporating the provinces of Battambong and Angkor with Cambodia in a kind of *Zollverein*, which would be an arrangement quite incompatible with the maintenance of the independence and integrity of Siam, in respect to which his Excellency had given Her Majesty's Government so many assurances," and on the same day Lord Rosebery made his final pronouncement that "the treatment of the two provinces of Battambong and Angkor as separate and distinct from the other portions of the Siamese Kingdom, seems to us inadmissible." It was not, however, until a week afterwards that M. Develle at last consented to withdraw the obnoxious phrase "reserved zones." But he does not seem to have promised any permanent restriction upon the extent of French control there; and so far as the Blue Book informs us, the matter has been left undecided; while, by the treaty of October 3, 1893, Siam is forbidden to exercise any military control whatever over these provinces, and new and special commercial provisions are to be made throughout them. The condition of things there can thus hardly be considered one of particularly stable equilibrium, since the slightest disturbance might at any moment give the French colonial authorities the coveted chance of stepping in to control these

provinces—a control from which, one may safely prophesy, they would never again emerge.

It must further be remembered that the nearest seaport of these rich provinces is Chantabun, and that France demanded, obtained, and still holds, the military occupation of this port, "pending the complete fulfilment by Siam of her new treaty obligations." It is true that M. Develle has said that this is merely a temporary measure "with no *arrière-pensée*"; while M. de Vilers stated in Bangkok, on October 2nd, that "the French Government had no intention of retaining possession of that place; that it was their interest to hasten the evacuation on account of the heavy expenditure which it involves." And M. Develle, on October 3rd, was "good enough" to assure Lord Dufferin that "the French Government earnestly desired to withdraw their troops from that place;" that "they desired no better than to evacuate the place;" and that "*within a month* Chantaboon would be evacuated." The fact remains, however, that at the present moment—nearly fifteen months later!—Chantabun is still in full military occupation by the French, who have recently landed more troops and heavy guns there, and are keeping hundreds of coolies at work raising the ramparts; and this though it is admitted that the Siamese fulfilled the conditions of the Convention more than a year ago.*

I have thus shown, by a bare narrative of indisputable facts, what has happened with regard to Luang Prabang, what is still happening at Chantabun, and what is approaching day by day within the coveted Lake Provinces. Three more plain facts may perhaps serve to confirm the impression regarding the growing nature of French designs on Siam which the foregoing narrative should not fail to produce. (1) It is not only the irresponsible hot-heads of the French colonial party who

* It was M. Develle himself who stated to Lord Dufferin, on October 3rd, that the only preliminary necessary for this evacuation was that the Siamese troops should be removed twenty-five kilometres west of the Mekong. There is no question as to the complete fulfilment of this clause long ago.

frankly demand the annexation or "protection" of the whole of Siam, but also many of the most serious and learned French writers on colonial policy. Among the latter M. Leroy-Beaulieu is pre-eminent. This is what he says in his latest volume: "Our action ought to embrace the Laos country, and even *the whole of the Kingdom of Siam.*" "We ought to extend our protectorate over the Laos country, and *over Siam,* and become frankly the allies of China."* (2) The French Legation in Bangkok is registering day by day as French subjects crowds of Siamese inhabitants—Laos, Cambodian, and pure Siamese—in fact, all who can be induced to apply, and each of these native French subjects will serve as a peg on which to hang pretexts of French interference as occasion may serve, all along the Mekong valley and the Lake Provinces, under Article VII. of the new treaty. (3) A new Convention has just been extracted from the Siamese, appointing French Commissioners (nominally with Siamese colleagues) to investigate and settle on the spot all disputes arising throughout the territories adjacent to the new frontier; thus creating a veritable *imperium in imperio* of French officials throughout these coveted districts, and affording every possible opportunity for further action.

To complete the materials for forming an adequate opinion of our rights and duties with regard to Siam, in comparison with those of France, the following few but very striking statistics are necessary. The total shipping entered and cleared at the port of Bangkok during 1892 was 410,890 tons. Of this, the British flag covered no less than 356,909 tons, or 87 per cent. How much was French? Rather less than Dutch, or 4,925 tons—a trifle over ·01 per cent.! As regards the value of the cargoes carried, the British share of imports was 93 per cent., and of exports 85 per cent. Against this, again, the value of French cargoes was ·03 per cent.! It is not surprising, with these figures in view, that France entered with a light heart upon a blockade of the Siamese coast. And the actual amount of

* "De la Colonisation chez les Peuples Modernes," pp. 563, 566.

purely British commerce with Siam is far from inconsiderable. In 1892, the last normal year, the trade of the Straits Settlements alone with Siam amounted to £2,465,822. Territorially, French interests in Siam are no greater than our own, her frontier forming the eastern boundary of the country, and ours the western, while her commercial interests are but a minute fraction of ours. Therefore, whatever rights France has for interference in Siam, British rights are vastly greater. This is—or should be—the key to the whole situation.

The French have twice before tried to found an empire over-sea to rival that of Great Britain—once in India, and once in Canada. Indo-China represents their third attempt. My preceding chapters have been written to small effect if they have not made it clear that there is practically no ground whatever to hope that an independent and prosperous Siam will continue to exist under the present *régime*. And if not, then Siam will come under either British or French protection, and the only question is, which shall it be? A short time ago Siam made overtures in the direction of inquiring whether Great Britain would accept her allegiance. The reply was a prompt and blunt negative. It is only fair to add a belief, however, that the Foreign Office has at last grasped the situation and taken a definite resolution with regard to its future policy.

MALAYA.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE POLITICAL POSITION OF THE NATIVE STATES.

CONTINENTAL Malaya is divided, like Gaul of old, into three parts: the Straits Settlements, the Protected Malay States, and the semi-independent Malay States further north. With the first two of these I have already dealt at length in preceding chapters. I come now, as the final division of this book, to the remains of Malayan nationality in Asia—the States of Kelantan, Tringanu, Raman, Patani, and less important ones, all of which lie to the north of the British Protected States and to the south of the Siamese Malay States which occupy the northern portion of the Peninsula. So comparatively unknown is this part of the world that I am unaware of the existence of any map in a European language which shows the division into States of the whole of the Malay Peninsula. In fact, if the student desires to find out the boundaries of the different Siamese States, and their correct names, he will have the greatest difficulty in doing so. The accompanying map, therefore, which I have prepared from many sources, including my own journeys and the official Siamese map drawn to illustrate the King's travels, should be found of service, though as regards the north I cannot claim undoubted accuracy for it. The Malay States have comparatively little interest for the student of Far Eastern politics, as their future is a matter of certainty, and their present condition, so far as administration is concerned, might be described within the limits of a paragraph. I shall therefore confine myself almost entirely to an account of my own

principal journey through the Peninsula, for this part of Malaya makes up in general interest what it lacks in political uncertainty, and few districts of the world's surface offer at the same time so picturesque and so novel a field to the explorer. It is a paradise alike to the sportsman, the naturalist, the collector of weapons and silver, the student of men and manners, and the mere seeker after adventure. Of all my travels and experiences in the Far East my journey across the Malay Peninsula was much the most entertaining. In fact, so far as mere surroundings make happiness, I have never enjoyed so many moments which, like Faust, I would have prolonged indefinitely, as during those months of lonely and far-off wandering in the heart of the unknown tropics.

Before inviting the reader, however, to accompany me into the land of coconut and kris, I must devote a brief chapter to the political position of the native States. This is a matter seldom or never mentioned outside official correspondence, and there but rarely and not always accurately. Yet before long a clear understanding of its main issues will be essential to all Englishmen who study Imperial policy. First, let me stop for a moment to summarise the scanty information that is available about the Siamese States in the extreme north, the unfamiliar names of which are, on the west coast—Renong, Takuapa, Takuatung, Puket (or Junk Ceylon, a corruption of the Malay name of Ujong Salang), Palian, Satul, and Perlis; on the east coast—Patavi, Chumpaun, Chaiya, the island of Samui, Nakonsitamaraj, Patalung, Sengora, Chana, Tepa, Nongchik, Tani, Jaring, Jala, Sai, and Ranga; with Raman, Patani, and Legê. Concerning most of these, as little is known by Europeans as of the remotest parts of Central Africa or Patagonia; and I am unfortunately not able to throw any original light upon them. They represent the long-past conquests of the more militant Siamese of old over the Malay Peninsula. Their population consists of Siamese and of Siamese-speaking Chinamen and Malays. The last named may be described as the backwoodsmen,

since their share of the common work consists of hunting and fishing, and supplying the products of the jungle. The Chinese, as elsewhere in the Peninsula, are the traders, the miners, and the wealthier portion of the community. The head of each State is appointed from Bangkok, and is often a Chinaman. From Penang, with which port all the commerce with the outside world is conducted, a sort of loose connection is kept up between the British authority and the States of the west coast, the Resident Councillor making a yearly visit in a government steamboat for the purpose of exchanging courtesies with the headmen and registering such British subjects as may present themselves. Mr. A. M. Skinner, in his last Report, dated April 30, 1894, is able to give for the first time figures of the aggregate trade between Penang and a number of Siamese and Malay States.* His table, which is therefore of much interest, is as follows:—

	Tin.	Live Stock.	Total.
Kedah ...	4,050	89,298	326,075
Perlis ...	—	4,096	4,411
Setul ...	—	33,308	33,320
Trang ...	51,905	81,419	133,362
Tongkah ...	1,674,303	27,208	1,701,798
Ghirbi ...	—	54,128	54,141
Pungah ...	27,319	—	27,334
Takuatong ...	—	—	—
Kopah ...	417,507	—	419,082
Renong ...	375,119	—	375,159
Totals ...	2,550,203 dols.	289,457 head.	3,074,682 dols.

The export is thus almost entirely tin, against which the chief import is opium, both exclusively with Penang. A considerable revenue flows into the Siamese Royal Treasury from these States, but it is obtained only by extorting everything

* I do not attempt to explain the discrepancies between Mr. Skinner's list and his spelling, and my own. My list is taken from the official Siamese map, and my spelling is a reproduction of the Siamese pronunciation. Not enough information exists for either accuracy or consistency.

possible from the people, and leaving virtually nothing for the development of the province itself. The Siamese expression for provincial authority is significant enough: they call it *kin muong*, literally, "to eat a province." The inhabitants of most of these States, therefore, are in a state of extreme poverty, and they are the helpless victims of misrule. The few of them that are fairly prosperous in spite of Siamese exactions, owe their good fortune to their tin-mines, some of which are beyond all comparison the richest in the world. Concerning the administration of these countries, Mr. Skinner says:—"Everything that we are accustomed to see done by the State in Perak is here rigidly left alone—road-making, sluices, prospecting, mining, and waterway administration." For instance, the road across the Isthmus of Kra to Chumpaun, which was begun for the King to cross the Peninsula, remains half-finished, as His Majesty changed his mind or was prevented by the trouble with France, and it will therefore in a short time revert to jungle. Mr. Skinner says that he obtained reliable figures at the Government offices in Puket, showing that some 480,000 dols. out of 560,000 received as revenue in 1893, was remitted to Bangkok; only about 50,000 being expended on the place itself, and not more than 10,000 or 12,000 apart from the cost of the Sikh Police and the revenue-cutter. It is an enormous revenue, he truly adds, to raise in a small island with not more than about 10,000 inhabitants, and if it were all spent on the place itself would soon make it like one of the Protected States. An administrative experiment which, Mr. Skinner says, was looked upon as a measure of reform, has recently been made in all the Siamese States, according to which 10 per cent. only of the revenue is to be taken by the Chief, one-third of the remainder being spent for the benefit of the State itself and two-thirds remitted to Bangkok. But the provincial third cannot be expended without orders from Bangkok, and now remains, and has for many months remained, locked up in the State chest. The purely Malay

States among those I have described as Siamese, are Kedah, Satul, and Perlis, and the river of each of the two latter is silting up, and the places themselves declining. The export of live stock will also show a large decrease when the next figures are made up, since Kedah has recently lost three-quarters of its cattle and buffaloes by rinderpest.

A curious bit of political history is contained in the story of how Kedah came under Siamese control. The story was first told by Mr. John Anderson, Secretary and Malay Translator to the Government of Penang, in 1824. No sooner, however, was his paper issued than it was recalled and suppressed, and the suppression was so stringent that he was compelled to give his word of honour that he had not retained a single copy. The book, therefore, is now of very great rarity. I had the good fortune to come suddenly upon a copy of it in a London second-hand bookseller's, and to procure it for a few shillings.* One copy escaped and was printed in the *Singapore Chronicle* in 1835; by 1854, however, this had become as rare as the original volume, and the paper was therefore reprinted in Vol. viii. of the *Journal of the Eastern Archipelago*, and this, in its turn, is now believed to be so rare that only three or four complete copies could be found. In 1882 it was reprinted, with additions and commentary, by the Straits Government as a confidential document. The reason for the suppression is not far to seek, for Mr. Anderson proved beyond doubt that the East India Company had grossly broken faith with the Raja of Kedah, and he made a strong plea for the protection not only of Kedah but of other States threatened or seized by the Siamese. Moreover, he denounced Siamese action in unmeasured terms, and at that time, as at the present day, the British authorities had for some wholly incomprehensible reason had the greatest objection to hurting Siamese feelings. More than one wrong to

* "Political and Commercial Considerations Relative to The Malayan Peninsula, and the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca. By John Anderson, Of the Honourable East India Company's Civil Service, Pinang. Prince of Wales Island, Printed under the Authority of Government, By William Cox, 1824."

a British subject has gone unrighted in Bangkok simply because the *mot d'ordre* of the India Office has been not to offend Siam. Mr. Anderson begins by telling how a Siamese fleet of boats appeared in the Kedah River on November 12, 1821, and how, in spite of the gallant defence of a handful of unprepared Malays, their leaders were killed and the people butchered. "The mode of execution," he says, "was horrible in the extreme; the men being tied up for the most trifling offence, and frequently upon mere suspicion, their arms extended with bamboos; when the executioner, with a ponderous instrument, split them right down from the crown of the head, and their mangled carcases were thrown into the river for the Alligators to devour." The Siamese afterwards attacked Perak and Selangor in the same way, but were beaten off by natives aided by the Company's forces. Kedah, however, was left to its fate. Yet when, in 1785, the Honourable Company had desired the island of Penang, they had concluded with the Raja a treaty in which the following passages occur:—

"Whereas Captain Light, Dewa Rajah, came here and informed me that the Rajah of Bengal ordered him to request Pulo Pinang from me, to make an English Settlement, where the Agents of the Company might reside, for the purpose of trading and building Ships of War, to protect the Island and to cruize at Sea, so that if any enemies of ours from the East or the West should come to attack us, the Company would regard them as enemies also and fight them, and all the expences of such Wars shall be borne by the Company. . . . Should any one in this Country become my enemy, even my own Children, all such shall be considered as enemies also of the Company; the Company shall not alter their engagements of alliance, so long as the heavenly bodies continue to perform their revolutions; and when any enemies attack us from the interior, they also shall be considered as enemies of the Company."

And in the following year the Home Government again approved of Captain Light's promise, and replied that they "were resolved to accept the King of Quedah's offer." In 1791, however, a treaty was concluded without mention of any offensive and defensive alliance; though there can be no doubt whatever that the Raja of Kedah considered that as the Government were in the enjoyment of their share of the original bargain, he was also in the enjoyment of his. The occurrences of 1821

undeceived him. The Honourable East India Company failed to keep its promise, and Kedah passed under the dominion of Siam.

I spent a very few pleasant days in Kedah, as the guest of the present Sultan; but there is little to say of the country of our former ally. The town of Alostar is a fairly flourishing and well-kept place, patrolled by the Sultan's force of Sikh police under an English officer. The Sultan's private launch came down the river to meet us, his carriage, with two big Australian horses, was at the wharf, and our quarters were charming. His officials were courteous in showing us the sights of the neighbourhood, including the famous limestone caves, and some snipe-shooting which probably could not be equalled in the world. Several times in the course of one morning I had to stand still until the barrels of my gun became cool enough to hold, as a single step would have put up more birds. As we were coming home down the river I shot a crocodile and an iguana. From Kedah a road runs across the peninsula to Sengora, and a concession for a railway has been granted to an Englishman, but up to the present time I believe the necessary capital has not been raised. If the heavy hand of Siam were raised from its administration, Kedah could undoubtedly be made one of the most flourishing States in the Peninsula. Kedah and this district figure thus quaintly in Burton's translation of Camoens :—

> "Behold Tavai City, whence begin
> Siam dominion, Reign and vast extent;
> Tenasserim, Quedá of towns the Queen
> That bear the burden of the hot piment."

Siamese influence in Kedah was thus established by force of arms and in consequence of the failure of the British to keep their engagements. From Perak, as I have said, they were quickly driven back. Over the States of Raman and Patani they also exercise influence, through the Chowkun of Sengora, a Siamese official. The name Patani, by the way, is frequently used for a very large tract of country in the centre of the Penin-

sula; as a matter of fact, Patani proper is one of the smallest and least important of the States, and a good deal of confusion arises from this misuse of the name. With regard to Kelantan and Tringanu, however, the two principal States north of Pahang on the east coast, the case is different. The Siamese are endeavouring to exercise here an authority to which they have no right whatever, and it is high time the British Government presented them with an ultimatum on this subject. The position of Tringanu and Kelantan is fixed by two Articles of the Treaty of Bangkok, made in 1826. These are as follows:—

Article X. The English and Siamese mutually agree, that there shall be an unrestricted trade between them in the English countries of Prince of Wales' Island, Malacca and Singapore, and the Siamese countries of Ligor, Medilong, Singora, Patani, Junk-Ceylon, Quedah and other Siamese provinces.

Article XII. Siam shall not go and obstruct or interrupt commerce in the States of Tringano and Calantan. English merchants and subjects shall have trade and intercourse in future with the same facility and freedom as they have heretofore had, and the English shall not go and molest, attack, or disturb those States upon any pretence whatever.

Thus Tringanu and Kelantan are specially omitted from the list of Siamese States, and further, Siam binds herself not to "go and obstruct or interrupt commerce" in them. By the treaty of 1856 these Articles were confirmed. It is therefore clear that Siam has no treaty rights which Great Britain need recognise over these States. They have, however, been in the habit of presenting to Siam every three years the *bunga mas*, or "Gold Flower"—a small tree made of gold-leaf and worth from two to three thousand dollars. It has been the habit of eastern States from time immemorial to present offerings of this kind as a token of friendship with more powerful States, without thereby abdicating their independence in the slightest degree. The Sultans of Tringanu and Kelantan both assured me, as they have often officially assured Governors of the Straits Settlements, that the *bunga mas* was not in any way to be interpreted as an admission of suzerainty, and that their States are absolutely independent of Siam.

This position has been recognised and insisted upon for many

years by the British authorities, one example of which may suffice. Sir Orfeur Cavenagh, Governor of the Straits Settlements, sent an ultimatum to the Sultan of Tringanu in 1862, ordering him to send back to Bangkok the ex-Sultan of Lingga, whose presence was destructive of peace in the Peninsula. As this ultimatum was neglected and the Court of Bangkok exhibited great duplicity, Tringanu was bombarded in 1863. In a letter to the British Consul at Bangkok, dated Singapore, October 8th, 1862, Governor Cavenagh points out that Tringanu is "a Malay State in the Peninsula forming no integral portion of the Siamese dominions." And in another letter, dated December 4th, he writes as follows:—"The States of Trengganu and Kelantan form no part of the territories of the Kingdom of Siam; all correspondence between the British Government and their Rulers has invariably been conducted direct through the Governor of the Straits Settlements." Shortly after this, an unfortunate and inexplicable blunder on the part of the British Foreign Minister and the subsequent Governor of the Straits Settlements threw this question into temporary confusion, to the great advantage of the Siamese. In 1869 the Sultan of Tringanu despatched an Envoy to England with letters and presents to the Queen and to the Prince of Wales. In due course Lord Granville sent to the Governor, Sir Harry Ord, the answers for transmission to the Sultan. To this communication Sir Harry Ord wrote a long reply, in which the following astounding passage occurs:—"With regard to the position of the Sultan of Trengganu, I have never heard it questioned but that he was, like the Raja of Kedah and other rulers of Provinces on the Malayan Peninsula, a tributary of the King of Siam, and that, as such, it was not competent for him to enter into any direct negotiation with a foreign Government." What Sir Harry Ord had "never heard questioned" was, as I have shown, the direct contradiction of the Articles of two treaties and the formally-expressed opinion of his immediate predecessor! He forwarded the replies to Siam, and it is needless to

add that they never reached Tringanu, which thus regarded itself as cast off by the British Government. This ignorant and insensate action on the part of Sir Harry Ord exercised the very worst influence in the Peninsula. It is constantly referred to in conversation among the natives, and the Prime Minister of Kedah quoted it to me as an example of the hopelessness of any attempt to deal with England. It passes comprehension that there was at the Foreign Office nobody with elementary knowledge of the treaties with Siam and the official correspondence between Singapore and Bangkok, to save Lord Granville from this one of his many diplomatic mistakes.

As I have explained in a previous chapter about Siam, the King has recently attempted to strengthen his hold over Kelantan and Tringanu by appointing Commissioners for that part of the Peninsula. This is bitterly resented by both Sultans, and in Tringanu has been successfully resisted. The Sultan of Kelantan has been less fortunate, and whenever the King of Siam was expected he hoisted a Siamese flag, about a foot square. But he persists to this day in declaring his independence, a position to which he is entitled by treaty, and in which he has had the support of at least one recent Governor of Singapore.

I have shaken up these dry bones of history because it is certain, in view of the rapidity with which events are moving in Indo-China, and of the imminent collapse of Siam, that the question of the future of the entire Peninsula will soon come up for settlement. There cannot be, of course, the least uncertainty about the result. No European Power but ourselves has the slightest interest there of any kind whatever. On a recent occasion when the project of digging a canal through the Isthmus of Kra was mentioned by the French to the King of Siam, the British Government promptly declared that such an enterprise was within its sphere of influence, and must not be considered without its consent. The rule of Siam over the inhabitants consists of extortion and nothing else,

and native rule is of a cruel and destructive character. On the other hand, the Peninsula is capable of enormous mineral and agricultural development; and the marvellous progress of the British Protected States, as I have shown in my chapter upon them, furnishes a conclusive proof of what can be accomplished under civilised authority. When the question comes up for decision—and we may hope in the interests of the Malays themselves that this moment will not be long deferred—the entire Peninsula will inevitably become British. Our dominion on land will then extend in an unbroken line from Singapore to Bombay.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A JUNGLE JOURNEY IN UNKNOWN MALAYA.

IN order to learn Malay, which is a very easy language, and to gain experience of the natives, I made a number of short journeys, chiefly for sport, from Singapore as headquarters. Then, when I was fairly independent of an interpreter and had gathered some knowledge of jungle law and lore, armed with letters of introduction in amber silk envelopes, addressed to two Malay Sultans, and a Siamese *thongkra*, or official authority, I left the hospitable little town of Taiping, the capital of Perak, one day in March, for Kuala Kangsar, the old capital. My plans were attractively vague, but my determination was definite. It was to reach the sea on the other side of the Peninsula through Raman and the forbidden State of Kelantan. Only one white man had—or has—accomplished this, Mr. Bozzolo, of whom more shortly, and nobody had ever reached the headwaters of the Kelantan River through the country I proposed to cross. Nor has any one yet repeated my journey.

Kelantan is by no means an easy country to penetrate. Many travellers from Singapore have vainly attempted to enter it from the sea and the east coast, and only last summer two Europeans were killed while trying to get in from a neighbouring State, while a well-known mining engineer, Mr. H. M. Becher, lost his life a short time ago while trying to explore some of the unknown parts of the neighbouring State. The Raja of Kelantan was a blood-thirsty and rapacious man, determined at any cost to keep the *orang puteh* out of his dominions, and as will be seen hereafter,

the means he adopted were as savage as they were simple. My own plan was to have recourse to that most efficacious of stimulants, the burning of one's boats. I proposed to travel on elephants until I reached any navigable tributary of the Kelantan River in the district I had determined to visit, and then to send all my elephants back. After this, to go forward would be a necessity, and in order to descend to the sea I took with me during the whole journey across country a dozen boatmen, whose duties would only begin when we reached a river, as I well knew that no boats or boatmen or any other help would be procurable on the borders of the forbidden State. But the traveller is like the child in this respect, that no place woos him so irresistibly as that which he may not enter.

At Kuala Kangsar my elephant-boxes had been made, my stores, weapons and photographic outfit collected, and my native companions were ready. The best of these was my old servant Walab, a "Bombay boy," who had already accompanied me through many of my Far Eastern experiences. Until I brought him to England he was a servant without faults. Strikingly handsome, with an equable temper that nothing could upset, and a sense of humour that anything tickled, honest beyond suspicion, and clever with his hands as a monkey, he was indeed a man-of-all-work. He was a perfect valet, sewed and washed like a Scotswoman, cleaned my guns, loaded my cartridges, skinned my specimens, kept my cameras in order, and broke the heart of every woman of his own rank—white, black, or brown—that he met. His devotion to me on this journey when provisions ran short and dangers threatened was unshaken. Unfortunately, I did him the disservice of bringing him to England, where his stay was short and unfortunate. Among the men engaged specially for this Malay journey were Taik Choon, my Chinese interpreter, a dyspeptic and hypochondriacal but very intelligent young Chinaman whom I had found at Penang; a Malay writer named, of course, Mahmat, who possessed enough of the characteristics of most

English-speaking natives to make me wish afterwards a thousand times that I had left him behind; and two privates of the Perak Sikhs, most kindly lent me by Colonel Walker, their Commandant (I of course finding their pay and clothes, as they did not wear uniform whilst with me), a pair of strapping Pathans named Buta and Menir Khan, both of whom had "passed in Malay." Their names will recur in this narrative, and I may anticipate its close by saying here that two more intelligent, brave and faithful companions no man ever had for a rough journey. Their presence was due to two considerations: first, it was necessary for me to have among my party, which reached nearly fifty natives before it finally got into the jungle, at least two who could be absolutely depended upon to stand by me in case of a mutiny or a fight, since otherwise I should have run the risk of being left to my own resources, if the journey became too laborious or armed opposition were offered. Second, my two boxes of dollars were the special charge of Buta and Menir Khan, one of whom was always to keep them in sight. These were not ordinary "Mexicans," but the once famous Maria Theresa dollar, with the two pillars on the reverse. This, for some unexplained reason, is the only civilised coin that the Malays of the interior will accept, and I had to pay a premium of 9 per cent. for them at Penang. It is not generally known that when we engaged in the Abyssinian War the British Government found itself in similar straits for its money, and finally purchased from the Austrian Government a set of dies for these coins, and struck its own supply.

At Kuala Kangsar the Perak River is a broad and placid stream, and at noon, on March 11th, our boatmen pushed off with their punt-poles and settled down to their long oars. The moment when he really gets afloat, either on sea or river, is always most welcome to the traveller. After the anxiety of preparation, the endless chatter which accompanies the hiring of his men, the lies, the excuses, the things broken or missing, the tongue-wagging of the ubiquitous prophets of evil, the

reiterations that never can the stores one has collected be stowed on board, the scramble of the last moment, and the final multitudinous yell of farewell—the sudden change to the peaceful motion of the boat, the pleasant contemplation of everything neatly disposed and the necessaries at hand, the silence broken only by the bubbling at the bow and the dripping from the oar-blade, and above all, the first Lorelei-notes of the unknown and the far-off, luring irresistibly onwards—all this brings comfort and sedate reflection. I considered myself lucky in having forgotten nothing but a spare mosquito-curtain and the zinc buckets, and waited next day while a man went back for them.

As we poled and paddled up the river the cultivation on the banks grew rarer, and the jungle began to come down till it reached the snake-like roots of the mangroves at the water's edge. At night we made fast to the bank, the "boy" cooked a meal, the mosquito-curtain was hung up under the curved roof of the boat, and sleep came quickly at the thought that we were still in British-protected territory, and as safe as if we were moored on the Thames. I spent the second night at Chiga Galla, the third at Kota Tampan, and on the fourth day I reached Tumulung, where two or three of my elephants were waiting for me, and exchanged the river for the road, as I was anxious to get on to Merah, the last outpost of British authority in the Peninsula. So, leaving the boats to pursue their toilsome way against the current and through the rapids to Janning, I packed myself upon an elephant and struck across the jungle path to Kenering, a village at the junction of the Perak River and the Sungei Kenering.* There I slung a hammock in a bamboo house that had been prepared for me, and starting again early next morning, two more elephants having kept an appointment with me there, I found a striking figure waiting for me in the path at midday.

* To understand proper names in Malay geography the following meanings of words should be borne in mind: *Sungei*, river; *Kuala*, the mouth of a river; *Ulu*, the headwaters of a river; *Bukit*, hill; *Gunong*, mountain; *Kampong*, village; *Pulau*, island; *Jeram*, rapids.

Mr. C. F. Bozzolo is a unique character. He was born in Italy, and began his adult life as an engineer on one of M. de Lesseps's dredgers at the digging of the Suez Canal. Then he came to the Far East as an engineer, and I believe it was he who, when instructed to report to an official whether a certain steam-launch would burn wood, replied: "Sir, I have the honour to report that this steam-launch is no more fitted to burn wood than a field-mouse is to wear a paper collar." Sir Hugh Low, discerning his great practical talents, placed him in charge of a government plantation in Perak, where he tried many truly extraordinary agricultural experiments. After he had made many journeys in the interior and acquired a mass of valuable information for the Perak Government, he was promoted to the post of Collector and Magistrate on the boundary of Perak and Raman, where he still exercises a beneficent and powerful sway over the natives. My photograph shows the admirable house he has built for himself there, to which he led me with no little pride, and where I was his guest for several days until the remainder of the elephants I had engaged arrived, and the boats reached Janning, the nearest navigable point on the Perak River. Mr. Bozzolo accompanied me during the first half of my journey, and I was under great obligations to him for his invaluable help. A man, too, who thinks in Italian, writes in an English of his own invention, speaks chiefly in Malay, can transact business in Siamese, and swears in a language with which one is fortunately unfamiliar; who knows every move on the native board, who can cook monkey and peacock to perfection and even produce a tasty *ragoût* of rat; and whose favourite costume is a rosary and a bath-towel, is no dull companion. The character of his administration may be judged from an anecdote or two out of the hundreds that might be told of him. He is a famous collector of Malay weapons, and on one occasion had become possessed of a valuable old kris blade which lacked its ivory handle. Bozzolo discovered a native who could carve him a *perkaka*—or king-

fisher-head—handle, but unfortunately he had no ivory. While reflecting on this misfortune he espied a Perak Government elephant—he has charge of them all—passing through his Compound on its way south. It had a pair of splendid tusks. Instantly, Bozzolo ordered the elephant to be brought back to him. "Is not this a very dangerous elephant?" he inquired of the driver. "No, *Tuan*," replied the driver, "very kind." "What!" exclaimed Bozzolo, "do you mean to tell me that you have never known this elephant to be *jehat?*" "Yes," admitted the man, "sometimes, of course, like all elephants, he is *banyak jehat*—very wicked." "I knew it," said Bozzolo; "I cannot permit such a powerful *jehat* elephant to go about with long tusks like this. Bring him down to the river." The elephant was brought to a sandy bank, made to lie down in shallow water, and in a short time, with the aid of a waxed thread and handfuls of sand, his dangerous tusks were cut off, and Bozzolo's kris was not long without a handle. One day this energetic officer was standing by his own front gate when two of the natives of his jurisdiction came up, looked at him, and passed without any salutation. Bozzolo called them back; then he sent for one of his police. "These are not men," he explained to him, "they are dogs; men have always the politeness to recognise me when they pass. Take them to the police station and make them each take out a dog-license." This was carried out to the letter, and there was no more discourtesy in the neighbourhood of Merah.

After three or four days spent with Bozzolo at Merah, we started for the interior on March 22nd. My little expedition had by this time increased to nearly fifty men and twelve elephants, and a very useful member had been added in the person of a Malay named Ali, who had much experience of such journeys. Every elephant had his own driver and often two, the hire of the men being included in that of the beast; there were over a dozen boatmen, with no duties for the present; a score of camp-men, to build the camp at night

and generally act as the interpreters to us of the strange human, animal, and plant life about us; Walab, Taik Choon, Mahmat, Ali, a Chinese cook—who fell ill a few days out and had to be escorted back—Bozzolo's Malay *Krani* or clerk, and the two Perak Sikhs. As the paths through the jungle, when they exist at all, are barely the width of an elephant's body, and we therefore always proceeded in single file, it will be understood that we made a fairly imposing appearance on our leisurely arrival at any place. Moreover, rumour, which flourishes exceedingly in the interior, representing as it does the newspaper, post-office and telegraph, magnified our strength in the most flattering manner. The first Malay Raja we met asked me, "Where are your soldiers?" "Here they are," I replied, pointing to Buta and Menir Khan. "Oh no," he retorted; "my men told me that they had counted three hundred!"

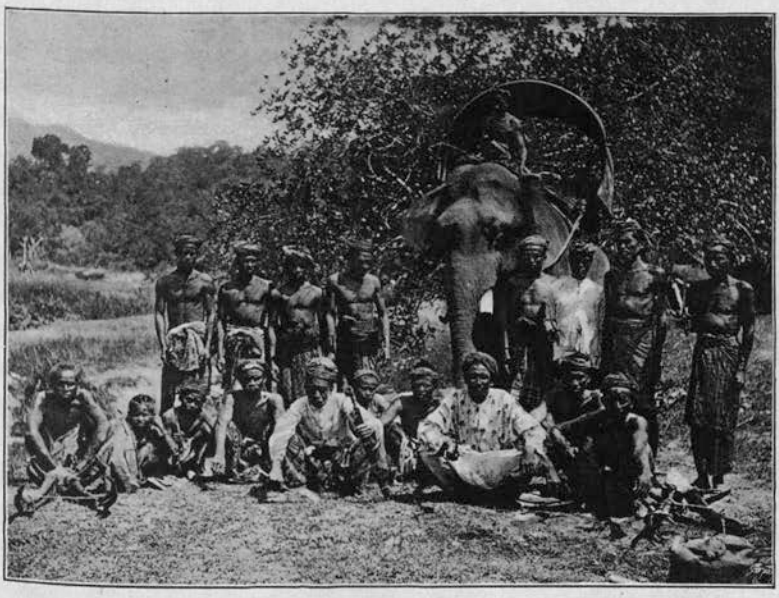
The building of our camp each night was a very interesting performance. Elephant-travelling is a slow process, fifteen miles a day being good marching, and therefore when the track was passable on foot I was generally ahead of the party in the afternoon. About four o'clock I began to look out for a good camping-ground, in an open space and as far from the actual jungle as possible, that a current of air might drive away the malaria; with water in the neighbourhood, by the banks of a stream for choice; with bamboo-clumps and attap palms at hand, to supply the material of our camp shelters; and not far from a sufficiently thick growth of plants to provide the elephants with fodder during the night. Having found a suitable place I stopped, and as soon as the head of the expedition came in sight the elephants were urged into their best shuffle, the boxes were quickly lifted from their backs and piled in a hollow square, the bags of rice—of which there were a great number, as often none was to be had for many days—were placed upon them; the weapons, ammunition, money and the box of dynamite arranged care-

fully in the centre, and waterproof sheets stretched over all. Then Taik Choon presided over the distribution of the day's rations of rice, dried fish and tobacco; the two Sikhs set up our tent, Walab arranged the beds in its interior, and the Chinese cook set to work. This done, I used to take my gun and stroll off to see if anything fresh could be added to the larder, and all the camp-men disappeared in the jungle. I should add, for the benefit of future travellers in Malaya, that the tent was only used two or three times. It was a huge unwieldy thing, often wet through and therefore a heavy and tiresome addition to an elephant's load, and it was neither so good a protection from animals or malaria, nor so warm and dry, as the little places our men built for us. After about half an hour they returned from different directions, bearing each a huge armful of green-stuff or bamboo poles of various sizes which each man had cut down with his *parang*. They met almost to a minute, and then as if by magic a charming little house sprang up from the ground. First they stuck four poles in the earth and upon these laid a flooring of bamboo about three feet from the ground. Over these appeared a perfectly thatched roof of the long leaves of the attap palm, watertight in anything but a tropical deluge, and soon four similar walls completed the structure. Often in mere exuberance of architectural ambition, these Aladdins of the jungle would build a capital four-legged table into the middle of the floor. My own sleeping-place being thus provided in a sufficiently luxurious fashion, they would erect a similar but less pretentious place for the cook and servants, and another for the elephant-drivers and themselves. It will hardly be believed that this whole process was completed in an hour and a half. The little thatched houses, of which some idea may be obtained from my illustrations, though these mostly show only the rough shelters built for the natives, were beautifully built, the bamboos lashed together in a way the smartest sailor would be puzzled to equal, and the attap thatching woven in a regular and

artistic fashion. The structures are mere "fit-ups," in theatrical language, used for one night only, and then left standing for the next native comer, by whom they are doubtless much appreciated; but anybody following the same road a couple of years afterwards would find them practically as good as new. The only tool used by a Malay for such work is the *parang*, a curved blade like a sickle, set in a straight handle of hard black wood, ornamented, if the possessor is a man of means, with one or more bands of silver. The blade is home-made, of soft iron, with a very sharp thin edge. This naturally is soon blunted, but a bit of sandstone and a bowl of water suffices to put a razor edge on it again in a few minutes. The *parang* is never out of the hand of a Malay, and every traveller soon finds out its uses and makes it his inseparable companion. For many months my own, given me by a Sultan, and decorated with bands and ornaments of virgin gold and hafted in carved ivory, was always in my belt—to lop off branches in front of my elephant, to clear a space from undergrowth, to split and pare a coconut, to sharpen a pencil, to cut up tobacco, to open a tin of meat, to divide the carcase of a goat or a deer, and if necessary to serve as a weapon of offence or defence. It has now come to the "base use" of a wall-decoration. In camp, when the elephants had been turned loose, the meal cooked and eaten, the entries made in the diary, the rice-pots filled and emptied, the needful precautions taken for the night, a plaintive song or two droned out by the Malays, the mosquito-curtain—most important duty for a white man in these latitudes—hung and scrupulously searched, a last tour of inspection made, and a flickering thought flung towards home and those that might possibly be remembering me there, I turned in, and it was not often later than eight o'clock when I wound up my watches, and boiled the thermometer if the camp was at an altitude.

Without elephants these Malayan jungles would be virtually impassable. The great beasts are a mixture of strength and

My Kitchen in the Jungle.



A Group in Camp.

weakness, of craft and simplicity. Their strength must be seen to be believed. The paths through the jungle from village to village are for the most part merely tracks from which the overhanging and interlacing foliage has been cut and thrust aside, and the virgin soil trodden into a black mud. After a rain this mud is feet deep, and no living creature except an elephant, a buffalo or a rhinoceros could labour through it. For a whole day I have sat on my elephant while he made his way along by lifting one foot at a time, inserting it deep into the slough in front, withdrawing another with a sound like the popping of a huge champagne-cork, all the time his belly being sunk in the mud. To this must be added the obstacles in the shape of great tree-trunks lying across the path. These he would negociate by rolling over them on his belly, to the imminent danger of dislodging the howdah and its occupant on his back. The worst enemies of the enormous pachyderm are the horse-fly and the mosquito. These insects insert their proboscis through the ducts in the elephant's skin and raise irritating sores. His chief terrors are the smell of wild elephants and fire. One of my narrowest escapes was when I was run away with in consequence of trying to force my mount round a jungle fire, in order not to be hemmed in by it. Nothing but a ride on an earthquake could be compared to the sensation of being run away with by an elephant. Nothing stops his wild rush, and he does not swerve for an obstacle but goes straight at it. A few shakes fling off everything on his back, and the rider has but a second or two in which to make up his mind which overhanging branch he will cling to, or if he will risk throwing himself off. A broken neck would be the certain consequence of remaining. As for stopping him, somebody has well said that you might as well try to stop a runaway locomotive by pulling with your walking-stick on the funnel, as seek to check an elephant at such a moment with the goad. The sounds an elephant makes are ludicrously disproportionate to its size. By stroking an elephant's lip in a

certain manner you can make it purr like a huge grimalkin, till the earth shakes beneath your feet. When it is afraid or angry it squeaks like an unoiled hinge. But when it suddenly jumps aside like a flea, you imagine for a moment that the ultimate terrestrial cataclysm has gone off. The Malays never wholly trust their elephants, and were nervous at my familiarities with mine, a sweet-tempered old female on whom I rode hundreds of miles. During the midday halt I used to call her up and she would come and stand with one foot on each side of my chest as I lay on my back and fed her with bananas. I was never angry with her but once—when she tried to kill the cook. On one occasion a little elephant of our party, running behind its mother, teased her beyond endurance, and she turned and gave him a shove which landed him feet uppermost at the bottom of a deep brook. For two hours he screamed like a steam whistle while we were all engaged in getting him out. Malay elephants have a language of their own which their drivers talk to them, and which is very easy to pick up. For instance, *Hee* means "Quick;" *Haw*, "Stop;" *Moo*, "Go to the right;" *Klung*, "Go to the left;" *Tehoh*, "Go backwards;" *Terhum*, "Kneel down;" *Peha*, "Don't rub against the tree;" *Peha moo*, "Don't rub against the tree on your right;" *Peha klung*, "Don't rub against the tree on your left;" and so on. An elephant obeys this language just as a human being would do. Every night when we reached camp and the loads were taken off, each driver would hobble his beast by tying its front legs together with rattan, so that it could only hop with both together. Then a huge wooden bell was hung round its neck and it was turned loose to wander in the jungle. All night long the faint *dong, dong* of these bells made a mournful noise round the camp. At daybreak each driver tracked his elephant by the sound, often going many miles for him. The elephant is in some respects a stupid beast, and many of the tales of its sagacity are apocryphal, yet it sometimes does very strangely intelligent things. Once a tiny elephant got jammed in between the

portions of a heavy tree-trunk which had been cut in two to leave a passage on the road. Its screams brought back its mother from ahead. She inspected it carefully for a moment, then walked a dozen steps backwards and lowering her head charged straight at it, shooting it out as if it had been fired from a gun. Now, she must have seen that although the little one could not move either way, there was really room for it to get through. If there had not been, her charge would have squashed it as flat as a pancake. The elephant's amusement is to filch a bunch of succulent stuff from a garden as he passes, mud is his cosmetic, the rapid is his footbath, and little he recks of the attraction of gravitation. I parted from mine almost in tears.

It is commonly said in the East that the Malays are a wilful and treacherous race, with whom one is never quite safe, and whose devotion and loyalty can never be wholly relied upon. At the door of a restaurant in Singapore stands or squats all that remains of a man who has been horribly mutilated, bearing on his breast a label which says, "The Victim of Malay Piracy," and the feelings he invokes in the passer are those which prompt the usual verdict upon the Malay race. On the principle of speaking well of the bridge which has borne you, my own report must be different. The Malay, when unspoiled by intercourse with foreigners or his own countrymen who have lived at a foreign settlement, is one of nature's gentlemen. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a backwoodsman, by choice. Prolonged, monotonous hard work is so repugnant to him that he would rather starve than undergo it. No inducement, for instance, will make a miner of him. Hence in such matters he is easily pushed to the wall by the ready and unscrupulous Chinaman. Sometimes this pride or laziness is very irritating. You want to get something done, and you find a Malay who could do it reclining at ease beneath his coconut-palm, with his wife or wives seated respectfully behind him. You say to him, "Will you do so-and-so for me?" He replies, "No,

Tuan, it is too hot." You say, "But I will give you five dollars." "It is much," he says, "but I am tired, and it is pleasant in the cool shade, and it would be very difficult to do what you wish." And no argument moves him, though the money you promise would be a small fortune. Offer him the loan of a rifle, however, to go and shoot something for you, and he will gladly do it for nothing. And once secure his friendship, and treat him as a friend, and, so far as my experience enables me to judge, he will stand by you to the death. The secret is that he comes of a very proud race, which has not lost its pride though circumstances have reduced it to a low rank among peoples. Respect his pride, and he is your friend; offend it, and he is your enemy. My man Ali and the Penghulu Bujoh—of whom more hereafter—were as plucky and faithful when the pinch came as men could be. All good be with them!—except for their loyalty my bones would probably be shining at night in some Kelantan jungle, and my fate a myth among my fellow-countrymen. The Malays, like all eastern races, are extremely particular about the treatment of their women by strangers. I gave stringent orders that interference with the women of the places through which we passed would be severely punished by me. When it occurred, I fell upon the offender with the utmost severity. On one occasion I publicly thrashed an elephant-driver with the handle of his own goad to an extent that threw a gloom over my party for several days. This sort of thing was mightily resented by the victim at the time, but public opinion turned afterwards in my favour, and to this attitude I attribute much of my freedom from opposition and enmity. In this matter every white traveller lies under a heavy responsibility toward those who may follow him. In a native village I was once met by a number of hostile inhabitants who barred the way and would not even allow me to buy provisions there. I learned afterwards that this was owing to the misconduct of a white man who had visited the place before. If he were to show himself there again he would be krissed at sight.

The jungle is a world of itself. Twenty feet back from the track and—

> "Lo! the half-finished world! Yon footfall retreating,—
> It might be the Maker disturbed at His task."

No human foot has ever pressed it: no interference of man has modified the conditions of primal life. All the strange green things that the rich warm earth produces and the tropical sun and rain nurse into exuberance are engaged in a desperate struggle for existence. So tight are they gripped together that it would take you an hour, *parang* in hand, to hew your way through them for a few yards. As Stevenson's last poem says—

> "I saw the wood for what it was—
> The lost and the victorious cause;
> The deadly battle pitched in line,
> Saw silent weapons cross and shine;
> Silent defeat, silent assault—
> A battle and a burial vault."

Above all towers and waves the bamboo—most graceful thing that grows; the unbreakable rattan, often hundreds of yards long, knots all the rest tight in its coils; and every now and then you are dazzled by a blaze of marvellous orchids, smothering some doomed tree—a fortune, if only you could take them home. There is little animal life in the jungle except an occasional snake and infinite myriads of insects. One morning as I rose from my bed a boa-constrictor rose with me and crawled away, no doubt well satisfied with his night's lodging. His skin, fifteen feet long, came home with me. Words fail me, not being an entomologist, to describe the insects. Conceive the most extraordinary shape you can, imagine it glaring with all the primary colours, and posing like the contortionist of a circus, and you would not have to go far in the jungle to see it realised *in petto*. Upon a pool in the path will be a thousand butterflies, blue and yellow and scarlet and purple and orange—every colour in nature's wanton palette. And

the moment you show a light at night, in comes the mantis, that creature whose hands are apparently clasped in prayer, but whose heart is filled with bloodthirstiness. This is the insect that St. Francis Xavier, misled by its devout attitude, requested to sing the praises of God, "which it immediately did in a very beautiful canticle." In all countries its raised thorax and extended raptorial legs have given it an undeserved reputation for sanctity, and hence people even in Southern Europe believe that its motions foretell coming events. The Malay has many quaint and Rabelaisian games with it, and believes, half in earnest, that by questioning it and then giving it a shake, he can learn whether his absent wife is faithful to him. Such are some of the aspects and inhabitants of the jungle. But the chief impression left on the mind of any one who penetrates it must be that of its marvellous nearness to the days of creation.

> "It is man in his garden, scarce awakened as yet
> From the sleep that fell on him when woman was made.
> The new-finished garden is plastic and wet
> From the hand that has fashioned its unpeopled shade."

It is unnecessary in this place, and would be wearisome to the reader, to narrate in detail my journey across the Peninsula. I will only describe a few of the incidents which distinguished one day from another, and sketch my route in outline.* The rest would be more appropriately told in a technical journal. The second night out from Merah, we camped at Ayer Naksa, at a small clearing deep in the jungle. An hour after leaving this

* My exact route—which, though it is roughly indicated upon the map in this volume, cannot be traced in detail upon any map except that which I prepared as I advanced—was as follows: Taiping, Kuala Kangsar, Chiga Galla, Kotah Tampan, Tumulung, Kuala Kinering, Janning (Merah), Kampong Laving, Bukit Naksa, Kampong Grik, Kampong Kronei, Bunga Rendang, Merchang, Jarom, Ayer Bah, Den Propoh, Batu Kapor, Kampong Joh, Goakapor, Tana Putch, Kala, Beluka, Laloh, Blentang, Tanjong Mas, Kampong Bukit, Kampong Plung, Kampong Segah, Kampong Chumei, Batu Mernang, Kuala Leh, Temoh, Pacho, and Kampong Stah, where I built my rafts for the river journey, as described in the next chapter. Each of the above places was where I camped, and I remained at some of them, of course, for several days.

IN THE JUNGLE: AN EARLY START.

place next morning, we crossed the boundary into what is known as the "disputed territory." This is marked by a line cut through the jungle, and the trees blazed on the side of the watershed. Historically and geographically, a considerable stretch of territory north of this belongs to Perak, but the Siamese claim it as part of the State of Raman. It was the subject of prolonged negociations between the British and Siamese Governments a few years ago, and the dispute was at last finally settled, and Prince Devawongse, who had come to England for the purpose, went to the Foreign Office to sign the Convention. At the very last moment, when the documents were spread upon the table and the pen dipped in the ink, he refused to sign, and the settlement fell through. This is the incident to which I have alluded in my previous account of the Siamese Foreign Minister. The matter is one of considerable importance, since some of the most valuable mineral territory in the Peninsula is situated just beyond the present improper boundary, and nothing would be simpler than for the Straits Government to settle the question by a determined attitude at the present time. At Kampong Grik, a curious little nocturnal adventure befel me. I had gone to bed in my tent, but was lying awake smoking, when I heard faint footsteps outside, and through the canvas, within a couple of feet of my head, came the purring and snuffling of a prowling tiger. I could distinctly hear his breathing and the scratch of his claws as he felt the strange obstacle in front of him. A loaded rifle lay by my side, and directly in front of my feet was the small half-open tent door. I raised the rifle and kept it pointed at the opening, and a few moments later the dark mass of his body closed it. I determined not to fire unless he should try to come in, as the chance of my killing him was slight and the chance of his killing me was excellent. So I lay motionless, in a state of mind which may be colloquially described as funk, until to my immense relief he took himself off. At Kronei came the first example of the effect of native rule. A miserable and dirty old

woman came to the camp to exchange a *sarong*—the woven silk garment which Malays of both sexes wear as a sort of petticoat —for food. I found that she was no less a personage than a sister of the Raja of Raman, and had formerly been wealthy from the taxes upon agriculture and tin-mining in the district over which she presided. Now, however, nearly all her people had migrated into Perak and the whole place was virtually abandoned; yet the tin-mines at Klian Intan are probably among the richest in the Peninsula. The next night was spent in the thick of the jungle, and on the following morning we crossed the watershed at Raman, at a spot where there are the remains of an old Perak fort. This is the boundary between Perak and Raman, as properly claimed by the Perak Government. Before reaching Merchang, I chanced upon a strange thing for the East, namely, a real game-preserve—a large stretch of forest, surrounded by a rough boundary, kept up by the Rajah of Raman for his own sport, severe penalties being visited upon any Malay who hunts in it. For the greater part of a morning I walked by a charming winding path through this, and on all sides there was evidence of the possibilities of excellent shooting. A few hours beyond Merchang is a place called Bitung, one of the seats of the Raja and a once prosperous village, now also deserted, all its inhabitants having moved over to Kedah to escape his exactions. At Jarom we camped inside a stockaded village, and I remember well shooting three wild peacock there. The wild bird is far more gorgeous than the tame one familiar to us, and when one of these, flying overhead, is stopped by a charge of heavy shot, and comes tumbling down with the sun shining on his outstretched wings and tail, it seems for a moment as though one had accidentally blown the end off a rainbow. The breast of a peacock, carefully cooked, is very good eating, but the Malays will not touch it, as, for peculiar reasons, they consider it an unclean bird. At Den Propoh, one of the oldest settlements, after which is named a pass we crossed at an altitude of 1,200 feet, there is an interesting tradition to the

effect that the place is haunted by the spirit of Toh Propoh, a former emigrant chief, supposed to have sprung from Gunong Angors, an extinct volcano. The Raja of Raman has a fine house here, in one of the rooms of which I was amused to see an old-fashioned foreign bedstead. Just before reaching Kampong Joh, we came to a village so recently deserted that the pigeons belonging to the inhabitants were still flying about it. I walked through all the empty houses to satisfy myself that nobody was left, and then I shot enough of the pigeons to provide us with a welcome meal all round. At Goakapor the headman gave us a very friendly welcome, and presented me with a fine young bull from his herd of buffaloes on the condition that I shot it with my elephant-rifle, which had aroused his keen curiosity. The herd was driven up, the bull picked out, and just before putting the rifle to my shoulder I looked round for the raja, as he called himself. His courage had failed at the last moment and he had fled. As soon as the bull fell, Buta ran up and slit its throat in Mohammedan fashion; and the feast which followed necessitated a halt of a couple of days, since almost every native member of the expedition was ill from over-eating, and the amount of pills and salts I had to disburse made a severe drain upon the medicine-chest.

The most welcome occasions to my men were when I promised to "shoot fish." Many of the rivers we passed were full of fish, and of course there is nobody to catch them. Rod and line, or nets, would be far too slow, and it was for this purpose that I had brought with me a box of dynamite. A likely spot having been chosen, I would take a couple of cakes of the explosive, imbed a detonator in them, attach a piece of fuse, and tie them to a heavy stone. Then, keeping all the natives at a distance, I would light the fuse and toss the stone into the deepest part of the river. Half a minute later there was a dull reverberation, the water heaved, and a cloud of smoke escaped. The men, stripped almost to the skin, would run up and stand in a row on the bank. In a short time a fish would be seen, belly

upwards, followed immediately by a score or a couple of hundred if the shot were a lucky one. With a shout of delight everybody would plunge in, and for five minutes there would be a scene of wild excitement and delight. The rice-pots would be full that night, and every man would have enough dried fish to last him for a day or two. In the native States it is of course forbidden to kill fish in this wholesale manner, but there was no harm in doing so in a district where the fish would otherwise have gone uncaught; and indeed without this expedient I should often have been at a loss to feed the expedition. As it was, provisions once or twice ran unpleasantly short. I was surprised, by the way, to find that in these far-inland rivers there were still crocodiles. The natives denied the fact, and would plunge in and wade about without the slightest fear; but I had on one occasion striking proof of the existence of the reptiles. One day we had crossed no fewer than nine rivers, sometimes wading up to our arm-pits, and in several cases the current was so swift that ropes had to be attached to the elephants for the men to cling to while crossing. Toward nightfall we came to a river too deep to ford, and a *détour* of several miles was necessary to reach a good camping-ground just on the other side. I called up a native of the locality and asked him, "*Adah boya disini?*" "*Tidah!*" was his instant reply, so I plunged in and swam across. Just as I was scrambling up the bank, I heard a shout from the men watching me, and a large crocodile came sliding down and splashed into the water within a few feet of me. After that I gave up swimming Malay rivers.

When we reached a place called Tana Puteh — literally, "White Earth"—Bozzolo and I left the camp for a couple of days, and on our swiftest elephant made a tour of a delightful agricultural district in that neighbourhood lying round a village called Kampong Topaya. Nowhere in the East have I seen a more attractive district for growing paddy. Crossing a mountain range coming back, we lost our way, and finding a well-kept path leading upwards, we followed it to the top of a high hill

My Camp at Kuala Leh.

The Last British Outpost, Perak.

called Bukit Jerei. This turned out to be a thrilling spot. At its summit we found ourselves on the edge of a sheer precipice, five or six hundred feet below which we could see the tops of the trees of a thick jungle. This place, we learned, is literally the Hill of Death. From the place where we were standing, condemned criminals and lunatics are hurled off into the forest below. The day before our visit, one unfortunate idiot who had become a nuisance in one of the Raja's villages, had been led up and thrown over. The hill has been used for this purpose from time immemorial, and one's imagination falters at the thought of the spectacle that would be presented below. For a few minutes we conceived the idea of exploring that ghastly jungle, where no Malay would dream of setting foot; but time was short, and we came to the conclusion that it would be rather too horrible. At Beluka a native vendetta had been raging, and a man came to me in camp to have his arm dressed. He had been shot at close quarters in a night attack ten days before, and a rough spherical bullet had passed clean through his right fore-arm, shattering the bone and leaving a dreadful hole which had already begun to mortify. The natives believe, of course, that a white man's medicine will cure anything; but this was beyond my surgery. He was a plucky patient, and I removed all the gangrened flesh and filled the hole with a plug of lint soaked in the strongest carbolic oil he could bear. But I fear that such rough treatment did not save him.

Tanjong Mas is the capital of the State of Legê. It is on the River Benara, up which boats of several tons burden come with difficulty from the coast, which is not far away. The surrounding district is a beautiful meadow country, fit for any cultivation. In front of the Sultan's residence, which is defended by a great fence of four-inch planks, set endwise in the ground, is a large racecourse. The Malays of this State have a bad character, but we were hospitably received and assigned quarters in the house of one of the officials. In the shops I bought some beautiful *sarongs*, and the best kris I saw in the Peninsula, with

a handle made of *suassa*, an alloy of gold and some other metal. The Sultan himself we could not see, as he was very ill, it was believed from the effects of poison, and great excitement was prevailing concerning his successor. Two candidates had already started for Sengora, with elephants loaded with dollars and presents to propitiate the Siamese Chowkun there. Soon after we left Tanjong Mas, a tropical rainstorm burst upon us, and all day long we journeyed under a terrific downpour. I was the first to reach a miserable village called Kampong Bukit, and took the nearest accommodation offered to me—one room in a crowded Malay house—as it was far too wet and dark to think of putting up a tent or building the customary shelter. For two hours I sat and shivered, until at nine o'clock the rest of the elephants began to arrive. The whole expedition was in a state of complete demoralisation, so, stripping to the skin and wrapping a towel round my waist, I went out into the pitch darkness, and under the hot deluge tried to bring some kind of order into the camp. At midnight, completely worn out, I returned to the room and flung myself down on the floor. At daybreak I woke, and saw in a moment the mistake I had made. It would have been better for me had I spent the whole night wandering in the jungle, for through the cracks in the bamboo floor I perceived below me a mass of horrible and reeking filth, in which several buffaloes were wallowing, and which was clearly the *cloaca maxima* of the whole family of men and beasts. I took as much quinine as I dared, but the consequences soon developed themselves. Next day I began to feel ill, and had recourse to chlorodyne. The day afterwards I was suffering from an unmistakable attack of dysentery. Now, in the Far East people commonly die of dysentery, even in hospitals and with skilful medical attendance. In my case, hundreds of miles from such assistance, and with nothing but a bottle of ipecacuanha—the most difficult drug in the world to administer persistently to one's self—and with no shelter but a palm-leaf hut in a steaming jungle, I could hardly expect to fare better. After a quarter of

an hour's mental revolt, I frankly resigned myself to the worst, and prepared to spend what I regarded as my last day or two in living over again in memory the happiest days, and communing with the dearest friends, of the past.

> "Oh! little did my mother think,
> The day she cradled me,
> The lands that I should travel in,
> The death that I should dee."

My camp-men surpassed themselves in building me a little house in an open space a mile or two further on, by the side of a pleasant stream; and for several days I flickered between life and death, while Buta and Menir Khan and Ali scoured the country for milk, each carrying an empty bottle into which he milked indiscriminately every goat, buffalo, or other female animal he could find. At last, however, I seemed to be turning the corner, and then a strange thing happened. One morning, word was brought to me that a species of medicine-man, half-Siamese, half-Malay, wished to know if he might see me. I thought his visit would at any rate be entertaining, and ordered him to be brought. He explained to me—speaking a Malay of which I could not understand half—that he was able to cure such sickness without medicine, by means of his own. I consented to an attempt, and after various kinds of incantation he proceeded to rub my back with a curious stone he carried, and with a ring on which was chiselled the figure of a snake. My recovery he naturally attributed to his own powers, we became good friends, and many strange things he told me. When I was leaving, I pressed upon him a few presents, and as I was sitting on my elephant he put up his hand to bid me farewell, and when I stretched mine down towards him he slipped upon my finger his serpent ring. I may be charged with superstition, but I still set great store by that ring.

For days after this I travelled propped up on my elephant, passing the time with a book of chess problems and a little travelling chess-board. I cannot too strongly recommend this

method to other travellers on monotonous journeys, for often the simplest problem will render one oblivious to the *ennui* of a whole day. For some time at this point, my diary contains nothing but the word, "sick." Three days later we reached Kuala Leh, just beyond which rise the "gold-hills of Temoh," the centre of the chief gold-mines of the native States. Here the land part of my journey virtually ended.

The district of Temoh belongs to none of the States which it adjoins, but is a small tract of independent territory held direct from the King of Siam. Its headman is a half-bred Chinaman, who pays a small yearly tribute for the authority which he exercises in a despotic manner over the little mining community. This numbers about three hundred Chinese and a hundred Malay inhabitants. The district is a triangular-shaped valley, about five miles long and four miles at its widest end. The hills which shut it in rise to a height of 3,000 feet, Temoh village, half-way along the triangle, being about 680 feet above the sea. It has been worked for its gold for certainly half-a-century, and many Chinamen have made their small fortunes there and returned to China. The gold-mining consisted at first of alluvial washing in the crudest manner, and this gradually led the miners further up the valley until they came to the reefs. There are still a number of huge pits where washing goes on, and the spoil-heaps left probably cover hundreds of acres. At the time of my visit there were no fewer than twenty-eight shafts driven upon the various reefs. Most of these I entered, and in several —although I have not the qualifications to offer any technical opinion upon their value—with my own hands I removed pieces of quartz showing visible gold. A Malay told me one day that at the bottom of the little river, which was about five feet deep, the soil was auriferous, and to prove it he took one of my cooking-pans, waded into the middle of the river, drew a deep breath, plunged below the surface, and reappeared with the pan full of earth. Sure enough, when this was washed, four or five grains of bright gold remained at the bottom of the pan. The Chinese

NATIVE MILL FOR CRUSHING GOLD-QUARTZ, TEMOH.

miners work in societies, or *kongsis*, which divide the proceeds amongst their members, down to the mere coolies, each man taking a share proportioned to the amount of his expenditure in the venture. All of them pay a heavy tax to the Chinese headman, who thus recoups himself for the bribe he no doubt paid to Siamese officials for his appointment. As the Chinese miners have hardly any iron tools, no explosives and no modern machinery of any kind, their treatment of the quartz is naturally very primitive and extravagant. They break it up originally by driving in wooden wedges and wetting them; the boulders are then carried in baskets on men's backs to the mills to be crushed, and the product undergoes a rough process of washing in troughs. These mills, of which my illustration shows the principal one, are constructed exactly on the lines of the ordinary Chinese rice-mill, the stamps being a series of trip-hammers, operated by an overshot water-wheel. A large amount of gold must have been taken from Temoh, and a good deal was offered me for sale, both in the shape of dust and nuggets; while the strange jewellery made by one family in Temoh village, and stained a deep red by being boiled in saffron and some alkali, is unique in its curious semi-savage beauty. I may add that a concession for part of this district was granted by the King of Siam a few years ago, and an attempt made by a London syndicate to work it, but unsuccessfully.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ON A RAFT THROUGH A FORBIDDEN STATE.

FROM Kuala Leh to a considerable distance down the Kelantan River I was in the unknown country. Mr. Bozzolo is the only European who has been in this district before, and he proceeded by a different route and entered the Kelantan River at a higher point than I intended to strike, leaving all this intermediate country unvisited. It is very easy to tell when you are the first white man in any place. From all round, beginning with daybreak and ending with nightfall, a steady stream of natives, men, women, and children, poured by. Most of them brought at first small presents—a dish of rice, a couple of fowls, a bit of metal-work, a bunch of bananas, which they offered me very humbly, with many protestations of friendship. These accepted, they would solemnly sit for hours, intently watching everything we did, and only uttering from time to time ejaculations of surprise as each new foreign marvel caught their eye. By and by they discovered that I was civilised enough to recognise the Malay custom which dictates that a present from an inferior to a superior must be met with a present of greater value, and then their "gifts" came pouring in with embarrassing lavishness. When I had returned a dollar a dozen times for a small supply of provisions I did not need, and smaller sums for smaller presents, the process naturally began to pall, and to their great disappointment I declined to receive further tokens of their good-will. To the children, however, I continued to distribute the tiny silver coins

I had brought for the purpose, with the result that my appearance must have been that of a Pied Piper of Hamelin, for whenever I took a dozen steps in any direction I was followed by a horde of nearly naked little people, their natural fears of the *orang puteh* struggling with their excitement and their hopes. I was anxious to keep on conspicuously good terms with the people hereabout, for the effect it would produce upon my own men, whose courage had been ebbing visibly ever since we had at last turned our faces finally in the direction of the dreaded Kelantan. The nearer this came, and the more clear it was that I was actually going on, the less energetic they were, and the greater their tendency to find a lion in the simplest path. Their desertion at this moment would have put a stop to my progress and compelled me to return ignominiously by the route I had already taken. Therefore I resorted to every possible expedient to keep up their spirits and promote harmonious relations with the inhabitants.

Before leaving Kuala Leh there were elaborate good-byes to be said, and many wishes for another meeting, which seemed to be sincere on the part of my new-made acquaintances. With old Captain Labet, the headman of the Chinese there, these were of a cordial and almost affecting character. I gave him the remaining dynamite and stock of detonators, a pistol, a number of small European objects, and in return he presented me with his most precious possession. This was a long sword, with a scabbard of bright red wood, a silver-mounted hilt, and a very thin blade, so sharp that it was difficult to feel the edge of it without cutting oneself. Its sharpness was not mere "edge" like a razor, but thinness of metal, with the same kind of edge as the blade of hard grass which cuts you almost without your knowledge. This sword was of such value in his eyes because it was *betua*—fortunate, of good omen—the most valuable attribute that a weapon can possess in the eyes of a Malay. The blade of this antique object is so thin that a vigorous thrust would inevitably snap

it off short. The workmanship of it is a complete puzzle to me. It is in some respects too well made to be of native workmanship, yet it does not look like a foreign weapon. Probably it is originally a combination of the two, a Malay workman having employed parts of a foreign weapon of some sort in manufacturing it. Whatever the real worth of its occult properties may be, it is certain that Captain Labet placed the most implicit confidence in them. Many a time he left my camp at night to walk alone for a mile or more through the jungle without even a light, simply drawing his sword and grasping it firmly in his old and half-palsied hand. Yet the jungle was full of dangers, both man and animal. On one occasion a tiger was positively known to be prowling about in the immediate neighbourhood, and it had actually killed a deer only the morning before within half a mile. Yet when I strongly urged upon the old man to take a lantern and allow me to send two or three men with him as an escort home, he laughed at the notion, and drawing his *betua* blade tapped it affectionately, assuring me with the utmost seriousness that anybody armed with that was much more than a match for any tiger. And when he gave it to me—I did my best to avoid robbing him of an object to which he attached so much value, and which had been in his family for more generations than he could remember—he conceived and explained that he was rendering me a very real service by thus enabling me to protect myself against many dangers. I trust that my pistol will serve him at least as well in case of need. The Chinese miners appeared at their doors or the mouths of their adits as I passed and presented me with bottles of *samshu*, the Chinese rice-wine, which grows very heady with keeping, and the poorer settlers passed water-melons up to me on the elephant. All day long we plodded toward the stream where I expected to find my boatmen and the results of their week's work. There were no gradients, but the ground was so soft that for choice we forsook the path and marched in the bed of the little river.

After thereby losing our way, and having to cut a new road through the jungle, we came at length to Kampong Stah, a village on the Sungei Tado, just below its junction with the Blimbing and the Sakaw. Here the boatmen had constructed a capital camp; they were on the best of terms with the people, who were eagerly expecting us, as they had never seen white man before; and what was of far more interest, two splendid house-rafts and one flat raft were moored in the stream. These were masterpieces of bamboo wood-craft. Four or five layers of large bamboo, cut off above a joint at each end, so as to be water-tight, formed the raft part, and upon these was built a capital little house, closed at the back and sides except for little windows covered with a curtain of attap-thatch, and with a pent-roof. Forward and aft were short uprights as rowlocks for the long paddles, and these again were all ready, made of course of the inevitable bamboo. Punt-poles had also been provided, and so thoughtful were the builders that they had actually added little fastenings on each wall in which my guns and rifle could be placed. The "contractors," however, had played their part less creditably. I had no sooner arrived than I was asked for money to pay for all that had been done and spent. I had advanced seven dollars to an individual called the Penghulu Puteh, or "white magistrate," to pay these men. I asked where he was, and was told in his house miles away. I sent telling him to come at once. He returned an answer that he was ill and could not. Not one cent had he ever given, and as I did not choose to waste a day in doing justice to him, he was able to keep the results of his swindling.

It was a busy day at Kampong Stah. All the followers had to be paid off, the elephant-hire paid, and the beasts sent back. The stores had to be reduced to the capacity of the rafts, and a careful selection made among the geological specimens. Most difficult of all, however, men had to be found if possible to accompany me down the river to the coast. This task proved insuperable. One man only could I hire, but he

was a good one. His name was the Penghulu Bujoh; he was a person of some official position and authority; his fame was great as a hunter; and his happy face and frank cheery manner at once impressed me in his favour. But in spite of his assistance, and lavish promises of both pay and protection, not another man could be persuaded. At last Ali took me aside and explained the cause of this unwillingness. Quite recently, it appeared, the Sultan of Kelantan, whose mere name sent a shudder through the natives even here in another State, had sent word that if any man gave help of any kind whatever to a white man to assist him to enter Kelantan, he, the Sultan, would cut off the offender's hands and feet, confiscate his property, and make slaves of the male members of his family and concubines of the female ones. This threat had the desired effect. So I fell back upon the arrangement I had previously planned as a *pis aller*, and took with me seven of the boatmen I had brought with me, first making them a solemn and public promise that if I lived I would see them safely out of the dominions of the Sultan of Kelantan before I parted from them. Thus at last everything was arranged, and when I had taken leave of Bozzolo we were ready to start. The men were collected, and the order given to push off. Seeing what lay before me, the moment would probably have given rise to some sentimental reflections if an incident had not occurred to turn everybody's thoughts into another channel. The Tado is a small but fairly swift stream at this point, and just below Kampong Stah are some difficult rapids. We had been afloat two minutes when, owing to some delay in the punters getting to work, my raft began to turn across stream. A warning cry from behind called sharp attention to the danger. Every man sprang to the oars and poles, but the raft had been caught by the current. In another minute we should have been drifting down the rapids, stern first, and the least that could have happened was the destruction of the raft and the loss of everything on board. Ali and the Penghulu were the first to grasp

My Rafts on the Kelantan River.

the situation, and both sprang into the river and tried to hold the raft. "Overboard!" I shouted to the Sikhs, and they instantly obeyed. A moment later I followed them, and Walab followed me. It was only up to my armpits in depth, so nothing followed beyond the wetting, though Walab, whose courage was greater than his strength, was nearly drowned. All this time Bozzolo had watched the scene from his elephant on the top of a neighbouring hillock, and he waved his hat sympathetically. That was the last I saw of him.

By the time we had successfully negociated the first rapids a change had come over the scene. Babel had given place to a dead silence, the village and every sign of human life had disappeared, the stream had broadened out and was as quiet as an autumn pool, magnificent trees overhung the river and came down to meet their shadows in the water, the men were standing idly by their dripping poles, wondering at the impressive spectacle, and not a sound broke the stillness. From a complete green arch behind, the second raft emerged in silence. So began my trip through Kelantan. It was one of the rare times of the poetry and perfect pleasure of travel. But to enjoy such moments one must be alone. The voice of even a friend would have jarred like the breaking of glass. A day like this is worth a year of life at home. But interruptions soon came. First a touch on the shoulder from the Penghulu showed me a fine peacock pluming himself on the bank about a hundred and fifty yards ahead, and I managed to bag him with a rook-rifle when we had drifted a little nearer. Then an exciting chase after a wounded iguana occupied us for some time. Every now and then the rowers would lay down their oars by a common impulse, and when I looked inquiringly at them would remark with a smile, "*Makan pinang, Tuan*," literally, "Eat betel, Sir." The little pot of *chunam*, or lime, would be produced, a *sireh* leaf selected and coated with it, a bit of betel-nut chipped off and rolled in the leaf, and the package chewed with every sign of gratification and refreshment. The *pinang* is to the Malay

what the cigarette and the brandy-and-soda are to the Englishman at home. The gift of a little of my own tobacco to roll into a cigarette, since the tobacco with which I supplied them as part of their rations did not lend itself kindly to cigarette-making, would put fresh vigour into their efforts. About four o'clock on the first day we espied a nice stretch of sandy bank and stopped there. Then the rice-pots were brought out, the evening meal prepared, a few stories told, to which I was usually a listener, and the arrangement made whereby Buta, Menir Khan, Ali, the Penghulu and I divided up the night into sentry-watches. On this night, just as the pots were boiling, the river suddenly and inexplicably began to rise, and extinguished all our fires.

Except for the adventures it might bring and the new light it threw upon this unknown country and its inhabitants, one day was exactly like another. Each ended as I have just described. It began by my waking under the mosquito-curtain, warm and snug, "safe from the bites of noxious insects, free from the infection of malarious diseases," as the "Hints to Travellers" impressively says. There are no sounds of movement in camp. I ought to get up—an early start is everything. I look out. A thick white mist is over all, and the mosquito-curtain is soaked. I remember all my acquaintances who have been struck down with fever from Malay travelling. "Early rising is fatal in malarious localities," says the "Hints" again. I open my watch; it is five o'clock. There is nothing for it, however, so I plunge out and into the river, and my shout sets everybody stirring. In a minute or two a couple of fires are blazing; the pots and the kettle are boiled, the men and Walab jump on board with them, and we are off by half-past five.

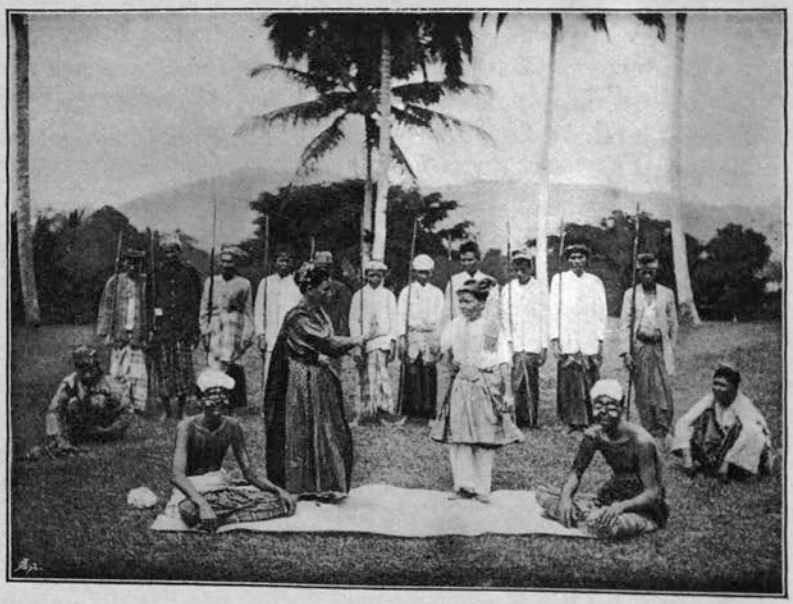
The principal events of the first day or two were the rapids, of which there were many, and bad ones. There is suddenly a roaring ahead, and big black rocks are discovered, with a narrow opening between them, diagonally athwart the stream, through which the water is pouring like a

mill-race. Everybody pulls and pushes, and lifts and poles; often the boatmen are in the water up to their necks. Slowly the raft scrapes to the opening, then "feels a thrill of life along its keel," or would if it had one; the waders leap on board; the oarsmen struggle and shout. For a minute or two it is touch-and-go whether or not the raft spins and is wrecked. Below the rapid there is always a stretch of quiet water, and the moment we are in it comes the inevitable remark, "*Makan pinang, Tuan.*" During the first day there was not a single *kampong*, but by the afternoon of the second we reached the clearing of a Chinaman who collects Customs for the Raja of Legê upon everything that comes up the river. He was a very friendly person, and was glad to sell me fowls, ducks, and coconuts; though the fowls were so wild and athletic from the amount of exercise they have to take to pick up a living, that after we bought a dozen my men had to organise a regular hunt before they could catch them. This man told me that with a quick canoe he gets from his house to Kota Bharu, the residence of the Sultan of Kelantan, in three days, so that with my rafts I might hope to make the journey in five. I hired an additional boatman here for part of the journey. Next day we came to a place where the river banks were all broken down by the trampling of a herd of wild elephants; and while we were looking at this we suddenly heard a tremendous outcry behind us, and the Chinese Towkay of the day before, and his termagant of a Chinese-Malay wife, came shooting down in a long, narrow dug-out. The woman had a huge old navy revolver, eighteen inches long, slung in a holster round her neck, and was evidently thirsting for somebody's blood. It appeared that their long-boat was stolen during the night, and she wished to take back the man I had hired, that he might join in the pursuit. It took her ten minutes of excited talking at the top of her voice to convey this fact to me. I said, "All right. I advanced this man two dollars; give me them back, and he can go with you." She subsided as suddenly as if she were shot with her own

pistol. As Ali said, "At first she was as big as this"—stretching out both his arms—"then when *Tuan* said 'two dollars,' she was as big as this"—showing the nail of his little finger; "if *Tuan* had said 'four dollars,' we should not have been able to see her at all!" At nine o'clock on this day, we went through the last rapid, Jeram Penara, which forms the boundary between the States of Legê and Kelantan. Here then, at last, we were in the forbidden State.

While the boats were being piloted through the rapid we got some cooking done, and I went off with my gun as usual, a ball in one barrel and shot in the other, to see if I could pick up anything. After about a quarter of an hour's walking, I heard a rustling in some thick growth in front of me. I proceeded very cautiously, thinking it was some small animal, and at last I located it in a particular bush. Then I gently pushed aside the branches with the barrels of my gun, and looked through. At the same moment the branches were parted from the opposite side, and a wild face, only half-human, looked straight into my own at the distance of a few feet. We were both taken aback; but the native recovered himself first, and with a sharp cry of terror disappeared in the jungle. It was no doubt one of the *Sakeis*, or semi-wild men, who are to be found in several parts of the Malay Peninsula. They are in a very low state of civilisation, stand greatly in fear of the Malays, and live entirely on the roots they dig up with a split bamboo, and the small birds and animals they can shoot with a small bow and arrow or a blow-pipe. They are very expert with the latter, and are said to employ powerful poison for their darts and arrows. So I thought myself fortunate not to have one of these in me unawares; but I felt rather elated that my approach had been so silent that this consummate woodsman had not discovered me before I discovered him. I might tell a score of other sporting anecdotes connected with this particular trip, but, as I have said before, this book is not the place for them. Soon after this the river, which is here called the Pergau, increased

SHOPS IN A MALAY TOWN.



A MALAY DRAMA BEFORE THE SULTAN.

in width till it was eighty yards wide, and apparently ran straight to the foot of the highest hill I had yet seen, called Bukit Pagah. On each side of the river was a village—the one on the right called Kampong Reka Bharu, or "New Echo," and on the left Kampong Reka Tua, or "Old Echo." In Legê the villages had seemed fairly prosperous, but these were the first specimens of what I afterwards found so often in Kelantan: places where at one time there had evidently been a small and flourishing community, of which the number of coconut trees furnished a good index, but now virtually deserted, the houses empty and falling to pieces, the cultivated land lapsing into jungle again, and the inhabitants dead of smallpox, murdered, or fled. Next day we reached Kuala Pergau, where this river runs into the Kelantan River, and as we approached the junction we found a broad navigable stream flowing into it obliquely and following the same course. The Kelantan River, according to the native view, does not begin till its junction with the Pergau, but this is contrary to proper geographical definition, as from its source in the hills of the district known as Ulu Kelantan—but never yet visited by any white man—to its mouth on the east coast, the Kelantan River is one and the same, and the Pergau is only one of its many affluents. Mr. Bozzolo states that the name of the Kelantan River above the Pergau is "Sungei Engere," but this is inaccurate, as no such name is known to the natives, who, without exception, call it Sungei Negiri. The Kelantan River at this point is from a hundred to a hundred and fifty yards wide, and probably six feet deep at its shallowest part, with fine ranges of wooded hills visible in the distance. Looking back, there was as beautiful a river view as I have ever seen, recalling the woods of Cliefden on the Thames. The speed of the current in many places may be judged from the fact that though I saw a number of wild pigeons, splendid kingfishers, and hornbills in the trees, the river was too swift for us to attempt to beach the rafts. When this country is at length explored by a naturalist, it will be famous for its king-

fishers, which are among the most beautiful birds I have ever seen. The Malays call them *perkaka*, a word made up of the prefix *per* and an imitation of the Aristophanic sound *kak-kak-kak* that the kingfisher makes when alarmed. Other beautiful birds that I saw here, and afterwards succeeded in shooting, were the *burong tiong*, a large black red-billed bird with golden ear-flaps and scarlet feet, and the *burong beruka*, a large pale-green and yellow pigeon. An amusing incident occurred when I went shooting one morning with the Penghulu Bujoh. I had shot several of these in rapid succession, and he ran to pick them up while I went in another direction. When he rejoined me I found that he had carefully cut the throat of each bird, nearly severing its head from its body and of course completely destroying the plumage. He had never imagined that they could be wanted except for food, and therefore like a good Mahommedan he had performed the *semblek* upon them! There was an old man living here, at a place called Kampong Dusun Renda (the village of the Low Orchard), who had formerly acted as a guide to Government surveying-parties in Selángor, but was now making his living at a gold-mine he alone knew of, near Kuala Jinam. He went to this every morning, spent the day washing for gold, and returned at night with his little stock. I bought from him some extremely good gold, so rough as to be almost nuggets. There are also gold-mines at Kuala Tosi in this neighbourhood. Further down the river, at Kuala Tuko, I heard that there were gold-diggings which had been successfully worked by a party of Chinamen, who, however, had deserted them three months before because of the impossibility of procuring rice or any supplies, and because the Raja had forbidden the opening of new mines. At Kampong Lalat, still further down, I came upon one of the few places in Kelantan where anything of the least value is produced. Here was an earthenware industry, where pots and vessels of singularly graceful shape were made. For a small sum I bought a basketful of these, and succeeded in bringing several of them uninjured to London, although they

are extremely brittle. At Kampong Lalat, too, I saw a big boat being built to go to the Galas gold-mines in Ulu Kelantan, a fact which throws light both on the value of these famous mines and on the navigability of the Kelantan River. It was 36 feet long, 4 feet 7 inches beam, and would carry 400 *gantangs* of rice—say, according to the *gantang* used at Temoh, 3,400 lb.; at any rate, not far from a ton and a half. The men who were building it said that its price when finished would be ten dollars —certainly the cheapest craft I ever heard of. Below this place the river passes a big outcrop of rocks called Batu Mâkbang, and then widens almost into a lake, with an exquisite view in both directions. Here I passed a large boat going up to Temoh with Chinese things to sell, and a crew of four Chinamen on board.

After leaving Batu Mâkbang, we stopped at five o'clock on an extensive sandbank, as my men had promised to start again at the rising of the moon, and here occurred the most ticklish incident of my river journey. When the Chinese boat passed us during the afternoon, I had noticed that one of the men on my last raft was acquainted with a Chinaman on board, and that they had rapidly exchanged a dozen sentences, though I was too far ahead to catch anything that was said. It now appeared that my extra raft-man was in the service of the Chinaman who owned the boat, and the latter had shouted to him that the Sultan of Kelantan was very angry with me, that he had sworn no white man should pass out of the river to sea, and that he was sending a boat filled with armed men to stop me and turn my expedition out of the country. This boat, the Chinaman had added, was just behind him, and as the raft had drifted out of earshot his last shouted words had been, "Take care of yourself, because the Raja is very angry with you." The raft-man had told Mahmat, he had told Taik Choon, and the latter told me. So I called up Ali and the Penghulu Bujoh and consulted with them. The situation was certainly unpleasant. Ali and the Penghulu regarded the matter in a very serious light. I

explained to them that I was not in the least afraid of the Raja or his armed men, because, in the first place, I felt sure he would not have given them orders to attack us, and, second, even if they did show fight, I was confident that we were numerous enough and well-armed enough, if only we stood by one another, to defeat not only one but many boat-loads of men. They advised me to call all my people together and explain the matter to them. So they were all collected, and sat in a semi-circle on the sand. Then I made Mahmat read the letter I had written to the Raja telling him that I was a peaceful traveller crossing his country with a royal passport from Siam, and that I personally stood security for my people. I showed them the *thongkra* with the big seal, the Malay letters in their yellow silk envelopes; and then I addressed them as follows: "The Raja does not know that I am travelling here by the permission of greater men than himself, or he would not be angry. But I do not believe this Chinaman's tale. It is only a Chinese lie. There is no boat coming to stop me, and if there were, what of it? The Raja dare not harm a white man. Remember Perak. The *Tuan Besar* was killed. What is Perak now? Remember Pahang. Only a Chinaman, but a British subject, was killed by the Raja. What is Pahang now? The Raja of Kelantan will not dare to touch one hair of my moustache. I have come here to go to Kota Bharu and Singapore, and I am going to Kota Bharu and Singapore. I have promised to take care of you all and to see you safe out of this wicked country, and I will do so. If a boat comes, or many boats, no matter. If they are good, I am good: if they are *jehat*, I am *jehat* also." Then I told them to go and cook their rice and think the matter over, and return and tell me their decision. This said, I went and sat down at a distance and smoked a cheroot.

In spite of this brave speech, however, I had one very real fear, and that was lest my people should run away. This would leave me absolutely stranded, and was quite likely to happen in consequence of the Sultan's threats. There was nothing to

prevent them deserting me, and the very name of Kelantan was almost enough to strike terror into them. In ten minutes they would have disappeared into the jungle. Then in the morning they would have only to cut down a score bamboos with their *parangs*, make a raft, cut a pole or two, and go straight back up-stream and make their way home across country. I, on the other hand, should be left perfectly helpless in the middle of the most dangerous State in the Malay Peninsula, totally unable to go either backwards or forwards, as I could not navigate a raft by myself and no native would either help me or supply me with food. Everything I possessed and had collected would be stolen and destroyed, and probably not for many years to come, if ever, would even the place or the circumstances of my death become known, since my men would of course deny all knowledge of me, to cover their own desertion, and the Raja of Kelantan would deny it equally from fear of reprisals by other white men. Curiously enough, I learned later, on my return to Singapore, that the Governor of the Straits Settlements and the Resident of Perak were exchanging telegrams at this time concerning the desirability of sending out a search-party to look for me, as my journey had already lasted much longer than I had originally expected.

In the meantime, the men sat in circles round their respective rice-pots, discussing the situation in low tones. I had a good deal of sympathy with them, for it must be remembered that for a Raja to fine them, or make slaves of them, or kill them, depends upon nothing whatever except his wish to do so, and they are as helpless in his hands as a chip in a surf. It was by this time quite dark, and Ali came across to me and whispered that two big boats, each filled with men, had just slipped down the river under the shadow of the trees opposite. One of the Sikhs also told me that he had seen them—probably fifty men in each boat. This looked rather like a gathering of the clans, and disposed me to put faith in the Chinaman's story.

When the men had eaten their rice, I called to Ali to tell them

to come back. They assembled again, and he, speaking for them all, replied that they were willing to go on; and speaking for himself, he declared that he would stick to me, Raja or no Raja. The Penghulu Bujoh rose, untied about twenty knots in his handkerchief, produced from the last one a new percussion-cap, placed it solemnly upon the nipple of his huge old muzzle-loader, and then stated that he too was my friend, and that if any of the Raja's men wished to fight, he was now ready for them. So we started, in the dark, down the river, and I was amused to notice that whereas before the alarm the rafts had been scattered and the last one usually a mile behind the first, now they could have been covered, like a pack of hounds, with a table-cloth.

Two hours later a terrific tropical storm suddenly broke upon us, with deafening thunder and blinding lightning. The river here was at least three hundred yards wide, and the wind raised such waves that only with the greatest difficulty could we prevent our rafts from being swamped before we could get them safely under shelter. I took several of the men, among whom I had previously distributed the arms, under the roof of my own raft, and the rest made a shelter out of a tarpaulin; and all night long we sat there in the downpour, each man nursing his gun and devoured by ferocious mosquitoes. When day at length dawned we presented a pitiful spectacle.

By noon of the fifth day we reached Tana Merah—literally, "Red Earth"—one of the most important villages in Kelantan. For the first time we saw signs of life and commerce, many trading boats being tied up at the foot of a high bank. With Ali and Taik Choon I scrambled up, and found at the top a dozen stalls offering cotton *sarongs*, matches, cakes, *blachang*—a favourite Malay condiment made of rotten prawns—and the hundred odds and ends of a Chinese shop. As we were walking through this primitive bazaar a tall Malay, the conspicuous kris in his belt politely covered by a cloth—the sign of friendly intentions—suddenly barred our way, and, in a voice trembling with excite-

ment, said, "*Ta bulik masoh, Tuan*"—"You cannot enter, Sir." I asked why, and he said that the Chinese Towkay had sent out to forbid us. So I turned back, and conspicuously asked one of the Malays standing by, what was the Towkay's name? He answered, Liu Wat. So I told Taik Choon to go and tell him that I should inform the Sultan I had been refused entrance to the bazaar. As I expected, Taik Choon soon returned, saying the Towkay explained that he did not know who I was, and therefore had forbidden my entrance; now that he knew, he would be glad to see us, but he could not come out to meet us, as he was sick and unable to walk. We went up into his big court-yard, where many *kajangs*, a sort of roof-mat, were drying, into a Chinese reception hall, where the same tall Malay who had previously stopped me, now politely invited us to enter. The Towkay was sitting on his bed, suffering from a kind of paralysis in the right leg. Stools were brought, and I had a long conversation with him. First of all, of course, he wanted medicine for his leg. I inquired into the symptoms and found I could do nothing, so I urged him strongly to go to Singapore to be treated. He was born here, but had once before been to Singapore, and said that he should take my advice. On leaving, I told him I was glad he had invited me into his house, as I should not now have to report his refusal, and I hoped that in future he would see that the *orang puteh* was politely received by his people. He was a merchant and planter, growing pepper and gambier, and dealing in cottons. There are about a hundred people in the place, and only one white man had been there before. After many "good words" at parting, he said we could now buy anything we liked. I went back to one shop, and was looking at some silk *sarongs*, when Taik Choon asked me privately to tell him which I wanted, and to go away. I did so, and he brought them, telling me that two truculent-looking Malays who were seated by the Towkay were *penghulus* sent by the Raja to forbid the people to allow us to land, or sell us anything, under heavy penalties. Therefore the Chinese

traders had asked Taik Choon to let them sell to him and not to us. The Towkay also sent a message to me, requesting that if I were asked whether I had bought anything in Tana Merah I should say no. It must not be forgotten that this is, with one single exception—Mr. Bozzolo's previous rapid journey down the river—a country absolutely unvisited by the white man. From Temoh to Kuala Pergau no white man at all had ever been; and even between Tana Merah and the capital, whenever we approached any land, the children shrieked and the adults ran away. When we camped that night, Ali came to me and said, "Are the *Tuan's* guns all ready?" "Why?" "*Adah orang-orang jehat banyak disini*"—"There are many bad men about here." And as Ali had no kris, he borrowed my hunting-knife. It was very cold and damp that night, and doing sentry-go was dreary work. My Malays coughed all night long, and I could hear them shivering. Their only clothing was a couple of thin cotton cloths, and yet several of them had big gold buttons knotted on their handkerchiefs, and could perfectly well afford a blanket or cloak. Buta took pity on one of them, and lent him his thick woollen military cape. We stopped later at Kampong Panah, exactly opposite the big hill of the same name, and a score of Chinamen came down to see us—Ho-kiens, engaged in raising peas. There were eighty of them living there, and about a hundred Malays. They were born at Panah, and had never seen a white man before; so I said I should charge them ten cents each for looking at me, and they thought it a capital joke.

Next morning the river had become broad and still, with long stretches between low-wooded banks, fringed almost all the way on the left bank with coconut and areca-nut palms. The *kampongs* now began to look fairly prosperous, enclosed in neat solid fences, with prettily-built *jambans* of mat-work on the beach. Taik Choon told me here that he had learned the Sultan had sent strict orders to prevent us going ashore anywhere, and that the storekeepers at Tana Merah were to be fined ten dollars

for selling things to us. At Kampong Paser Mas we found a big village, fronting on the river for several hundred yards. Many boats were anchored or sailing about, and the women and men were dressed in the brightest colours, barbarously combined but occasionally hitting off a fine effect. I heard of a remarkable mine of galena some distance ahead, at a place called Penei; so I despatched Ali on foot to get information about it, and meet us lower down. Two hours later he hailed us from the shore, waded out, and swam to the raft, holding his clothes above his head. His report was simply, "*Sudah pergi Pahang.*" All the miners had fled into Pahang ten months ago. By midday the river had widened to a quarter of a mile, and as a fresh breeze was blowing, numbers of sailing-boats were coming up. Ahead, on a high bank, we could see a big town of many houses, stretching out of sight; on the left a long sandspit came into view, and through my glass I discovered opposite to it a shore crowded with houses and boats, many of them sea-going craft. It was Kota Bharu, the capital of Kelantan, at last.

On our right as we drifted down was a row of palisades, half a mile long. Good-looking houses nestled each in its little clump of fruit-trees, with coconut palms waving overhead. Crowds of people were walking up and down a kind of natural boulevard—*Hadjis* with their white headgear; gaily-dressed women; men, each with at least two krises stuck in his waist-cloth; and scores of naked urchins skylarking in the water. Long wooden ladders gave access from the bank to the river. The peaked roof of a mosque, or Chinese temple, stood up among the trees, and the buzz of a big town soon became audible. As I was uncertain what reception we should meet with, and as the surroundings of a native community are always of the most insanitary character, I beached the rafts and set up my tent on the clean sandspit, exactly opposite the main street.

By way of opening communications with the Sultan I immediately despatched Taik Choon, in his best clothes, to the headman of the Chinese to learn if he would undertake to deliver a

letter. Soon after my boat had gone, a canoe came swiftly across the river and stopped alongside, two men paddling it, and a third, evidently a person of consequence, his kris covered with a gay silk *sarong*, seated in the middle. "*Tabi, Tuan,*" said he, and we exchanged a few commonplace greetings. Then he inquired casually, "Where have you come from?" "From Legê." "How long has it taken you?" "Seven days." "How long do you intend to stay?" "I don't know. A few days." "Where will you go next?" "To Tringanu." "And then?" But it was my turn now. "*Sudah-lah*—enough of this. Now, who sent *you* here?" "Nobody." "What do you want?" "Nothing at all." "Are you one of the Sultan's men?" "No." "Or one of the Ministers?" "No. *Tabi, Tuan.*" "*Tabi.*" And he paddled away, of course to go straight back to the Sultan with his information. Such is a fair specimen of a Malay conversation. At dusk Taik Choon returned, saying the *Kapitan China* was rather afraid of the Sultan, who was very angry, and that he dare not deliver my letter. So I sent him back to give it to the *Nisso*—a Minister I had heard of. He returned very late, saying that the Minister had promised to give the letter to the Sultan early in the morning.

Next day I rose early, dressed myself in my one civilised suit, and went across to the town. On landing, I discovered the Sultan examining a huge shed-like erection which was being built to receive the King of Siam, who was expected on a visit; so I promptly turned in another direction, as I did not wish to meet the Sultan except by appointment. Kota Bharu is very much like other Malay towns except for its big mosque. The main street runs at right angles to the river, the upper side of it being the Malay town and the lower side the Chinese town. A long jetty and covered promenade was being put up for the King's landing, and a very small Siamese flag was fluttering at the river end of it. The *Nisso* was not at home, so with Taik Choon I went on to a Chinese shop and asked to see some of the

famous Kelantan silks. The shopkeeper produced a few, and while I was looking at them a woman turned up with two or three more, then a boy with others, till at last the shop and street were crowded with people wishing to sell. After spending all my available dollars in buying the really beautiful *sarongs* and *kain lepas* that are only to be procured here, I went back to the Minister's and found him at home. Mats were politely offered us to sit upon, and after a few minutes he came in, nervously chewing betel—a big heavy man with a cruel shaven face and cropped hair, wearing a *sarong* and striped jacket of black and red silk, and fingering the black-handled gold-decorated kris in his belt. He shook hands affably, and after the usual conversation, in the course of which I learned that his name was Sri Paduka Wan Yusuf, he said that the Sultan would receive me at two o'clock. When we were half-way back to the raft, however, I learned by accident that the Sultan proposed to receive me in the unfinished shed, where he was going again to inspect the decorations. This, of course, would have been the most undignified reception possible, and would have lowered the prestige of any Europeans who might come after me. I therefore decided to take a high line and refuse the invitation. So I sent Taik Choon back to Wan Yusuf with a message, carefully worded, saying that I was accustomed to be received with courtesy and in a friendly manner by the rulers of all the countries I travelled through, and that the Sultan must either grant me a formal audience or I should go away without seeing him at all. Then I went back to the raft. When Taik Choon returned, I found that he had so much improved upon my message as to say that I had important business with the Sultan, and that I insisted upon seeing him alone immediately. This was, of course, utterly out of the question: I might as well have asked for one of his ears. I rated Taik Choon soundly and sent him back again to put matters right. An hour afterwards he returned in a great hurry, white to the lips, and gasped out the news that the

Sultan had sent to seize one of the men I had brought from Perak, had had the man dragged before him by three of his armed followers, had questioned him closely about where he came from, whether I had much *batu mas*—literally, gold-stone —with me, whether I had much money, &c., to all of which the man had replied that he did not know. He declared that he had come from Klang, but the Sultan said he knew he came from Perak, and that if he told lies he would put him in prison and keep him there. The man was still, Taik Choon said, detained in the street just behind the big shed. Of course there was no time to lose, so taking the two Sikhs with me, and without visible arms, though we each had a revolver strapped where it could not be seen, I rowed straight across to the town. I found the man in a state of dreadful fright, as he had expected every minute to be krissed or have his hands cut off, in the middle of a band of the Sultan's men. The three of us walked through the group without a word; I took the Perak man by the arm, saying, "There is a mistake; this man is mine," and marched him straight back to the river, the crowd falling apart and nobody offering any resistance. This incident, however, frightened the men so much that they begged me not to send them across the river again, as they feared the Sultan would carry them off.

My prompt action in this case, and my refusal to accept the invitation the Sultan had sent me, produced a good effect, and later in the day Wan Yusuf sent a message to say that the Sultan would receive me the next day in a hall, also built to receive the King of Siam, but finished and decorated, and therefore a suitable place. Before I saw him, however, one of my strangest Eastern experiences happened. During that night I received two visitors who made to me the most remarkable proposal it has ever been my lot to receive.

Just before dusk, Ali brought me word that two messengers from the town wished to speak to me, but they would not come to my tent, and asked me to go down to them just where the

THE MAIN STREET AND ENTRANCE TO THE SULTAN'S RESIDENCE, TRINGANU.

sandspit ended and the trees began. I naturally suspected some plot, but Ali said he was sure there were only two of them, so I went with him. One I immediately recognised as a man I had seen in the Sultan's retinue the same morning. They asked me to speak with them alone for a minute, and I walked twenty steps or so away with them. Then they told me, with every appearance of alarm and secrecy, that the four younger brothers of the Sultan wished to know if I would receive them in the middle of the night, as they had some important news to tell me. I asked, of course, why they did not come across openly in daylight. The messengers explained that they were afraid of their brother the Sultan, who kept them shut up in the house, and never allowed them to go out without being watched, and that if he caught them visiting me he would be furious, and the consequences unpleasant for everybody concerned. I still had my suspicions about this proposal, and asked them a number of questions, but finally came to the conclusion that the affair was as they said, and therefore, as it seemed to promise an adventure out of the common, I said I would be alone in my tent waiting for them at midnight. Accordingly, after all my men had turned in, I put out my light and sat inside the tent door, waiting. By and by I saw two figures in the darkness, some distance away, making signs to me. To go to them alone under such circumstances seemed rather like tempting Providence, so I quietly called Buta, who was on duty at the raft, and together we walked over to where I had seen the figures. These proved to be the two men who had brought the message to me. "Where are the princes?" I asked. "They say they are sorry, but they cannot come." "Why not?" "*Orang-orang jaga*"—"Men are on the watch." The Sultan was keeping so close a guard over his brothers that they were unable to slip away; so the appointment was renewed for the following night. I adopted the same precautions, and at one o'clock they came: four young princes, with the same two men. The latter stayed outside with one of

the Sikhs whom I posted at a distance with orders to allow no person whatever to come near the tent. Then for four hours I listened to a strange tale. As the persons chiefly concerned in it are still living, and Kota Bharu is not far enough from Singapore to preclude the transmission of news, I must necessarily suppress many of the details. The point of the interview was, that they considered their brother the Sultan had usurped the royal authority, and had used the money of all his brothers to bribe Siamese recognition of his position. He was, they told me, very cruel to everybody, themselves included; he was determined not to allow white men to enter the State, and had given savage orders to exclude them; he was greatly hated even by most of his own people; and they had determined to attempt a revolution. The stories they told me about their brother won my sympathy, and the one of themselves whom they proposed to set upon the throne impressed me as a young man of great intelligence and kindliness of character. They assured me that at a signal from them, three out of every four Malays in the district would revolt. What they lacked was, first, arms, and second, money; the Sultan having plenty of both. They asked me if I thought the *Tuan Yang Terutama Gebenor* at Singapore would sympathise with their cause and help them. I smiled as I thought of the reception I should have from Sir Cecil Smith if I made myself their messenger, and I told them that though it was practically certain, in my opinion, that the Governor would take no steps to replace their brother in authority if they once succeeded in overthrowing him, I was far more certain that no British official help would under any circumstances be given them in the process. Then they pressed their plan home. Would *I* undertake to secure for them a certain sum in dollars, and to bring it, with arms and ammunition, to a point on the coast where trusted followers of their own would meet me? If I would do this, they promised, first, that no unnecessary cruelty should be perpetrated; second, that the State of Kelantan should be thrown open to white men,

and concessions for mining and planting be given upon reasonable terms; third, that they would confer upon me certain privileges, upon which I need not dwell. I will not deny that for the moment the proposition distinctly tempted me.

The result, if successful, would have been in every way an advantage to the miserable people of Kelantan and to my own countrymen. Moreover, it would only be anticipating by a few years an inevitable political development. The character of the Sultan and his rule were such that nobody need feel a moment's scruple in trying to overthrow him. In the Far East I knew a dozen men who would have provided a share of the necessary funds. The fight itself would have been neither long nor severe; the results in my own case would have been very satisfactory; and no great relish for adventure was needed to render the enterprise tempting from that point of view. I told them I would consider their proposal, and just before dawn they left me, stole along the bank to where their canoe was hidden a mile above, and slipped back across the river. Daylight, however, and sober reflection painted the scheme in its true colours, and the power of the conventionality from which not even a lonely traveller can escape, asserted itself. So when they returned the next night, I told them that such an affair was not to be thought of. They charged me, however, to remember, after I had left, many things which they impressed upon me, and departed with the expression of a hope that I might some day return to Kelantan more disposed to aid in rescuing her from her sad fate. I believe the Sultan has since died or been made away with, and that one of my midnight visitors has succeeded him; so now, at any rate, there would be but three plotters against authority. The would-be Sultan gave me a little gold-mounted *badik*, or stabbing knife, for a parting gift, and when I look at it I cannot help comparing myself, *longo intervallo*, with a famous European conspirator of modern times, who was presented with a jewelled dagger for his great deed, but who sold the hilt and did not use the blade.

My interview with the notorious Sultan was "more for the honour of the thing," than for any practical result. He was a man on this side of middle age, rather pale, furtive-looking, and with deep marks of cruelty and dissipation on his face. When I was led into the reception hall he was already seated upon a deer-skin on a raised platform, surrounded by his Ministers and a dozen heavily-armed men. Behind him stood officials bearing his golden kris and other insignia of royalty. The floor of the hall was nearly filled with seated Malays, all dressed in brightly-coloured *sarong* and *baju*, every man armed to the teeth. A less prepossessing set of people I have seldom seen, and I must confess that I felt a certain thrill as I looked round at their obviously angry faces and reflected that a single word of irritation from the potentate of evil reputation before me would bring this and all other journeys to an abrupt end for me. He had intended that I should take a seat upon the bare floor in front of him, by which arrangement my head would have been just at the height of his feet, to say nothing of the awkward figure inevitably cut by a man in European clothes squatting upon the floor. I had foreseen this situation, however, and provided against it, and when he motioned me to sit down, I made a sign to Walab, who stepped forward, looking very fine in his white tunic, scarlet turban and gold sash, and unfolded for me a small stool, upon which I proceeded to make myself at home. This took the Sultan by surprise, and he had a second's hesitation while he evidently reflected whether this presumption should not be resented. Our conversation was at first of the customary formal character. Then I asked him if it were true that he had sent orders up the river to turn me back, to forbid me to land, and to prevent me buying anything from the people. He said that he had not done so, but that the people were foolish and did not like white men, and that if I would tell him what I wished to buy he would see that it was supplied to me. He added that one white man who had visited Kota Bharu before had behaved very badly indeed, and had

even carried off the wife of one of his own men. I replied that if this fact had been properly reported to the Governor at Singapore, who, as I knew, looked upon the Sultan of Kelantan as a friend, he would have taken steps to punish the abductor. I may say here that I afterwards learned from a native that after the white man in question, whose name I will not mention, had left Kota Bharu and had got safe off with the woman, the Sultan made inquiries into his conduct and seized seven other women who had been too friendly with him, caused their heads to be shaved, and nailed them all by the ear to trees, in which position they remained for several days. The sandbank, too, where I was camped, was the place on which he used to cut off men's hands, plunge the bleeding stumps into hot oil or lime, and leave them to get away as best they could when they recovered. On one occasion he had both the hands and feet of a man thus chopped off. When our conversation was ended, I asked the Sultan to give orders that a boat should be hired to me to take me to Tringanu, and another to convey my men north into Legê. He made various excuses on this latter point, saying that the men would be quite safe with him, but when I insisted he finally promised and issued orders there and then to Wan Yusuf. I thought that my difficulties were thus at an end, but I had yet to learn that this ruffianly Raja was at that very moment planning one more little surprise for me.

The story of my Malay travel may now soon be brought to a close, although I find I have not had space to tell the half of it. The boat promised me by the Sultan of Kelantan sailed over to my camp a few days later, and before we embarked I packed upon another the men whom I had promised to see out of the country, and started them down the river in advance. My own vessel was an unwieldy sort of lugger, of the kind called *tongkang* by the Chinese, and her crew consisted of a *nakhoda*, or skipper, two men and a boy. With a fair wind we swept down to the Kuala, I had the satisfaction of seeing the other boat turn her bows north towards the coast of Legê, and

I thought my adventures were all over for the time. Suddenly, however, as I was writing up my diary, I saw from the corner of my eye the *nakhoda* put the long tiller hard over to port. I did not look up, as I presumed we were just turning down the coast. A few seconds later we ran straight upon a sandbank, bows on. We were going so fast that we struck with a jerk which sent everybody sprawling along the deck. I sprang to my feet and looked around. We were on a bank in the very middle of the river, a mile above its mouth. It was out of the question that the *nakhoda* had not known of such an obstacle to navigation, and I had not a moment's doubt that he had run us aground purposely. If so, the conclusion was obvious. We could not get away till high tide next day, and therefore the situation had to be faced. I thought it better not to put him on his guard by letting him see that I had understood his plan, so I merely remarked that it was unlucky, and took the first opportunity of telling Buta and Menir Khan that we should probably be attacked during the night and that therefore I would share the watch with them. I took the first, while they slept, and turned in at ten o'clock. I had been asleep about a couple of hours and was sleeping very soundly when I became dimly aware of voices talking near the boat. I awoke but slowly, as I had been very tired, but when I heard the grinding of another boat against our own I was up in a minute and peeping through the bamboo lattice that covered the sides of the place where I was lying—a sort of deck-house, sunk a few feet below the level of the deck. What I saw was sufficient to dispel the last trace of sleep. A long canoe lay alongside, and just behind it another was floating in the semi-darkness. Both were crowded with Malays. Now, no respectable Malay is ever out at night, especially in such a locality as this. At dark they fasten themselves securely in their own houses, to be safe from marauders of all kinds. It is always a safe presumption, therefore, that any Malay found abroad at night is a bad character. The men in these boats could not possibly be other than dangerous visitors

of some kind. I saw at a glance that one man was standing at the prow of the first canoe, talking earnestly to Buta, whose watch it was, and who was answering him rapidly in excited tones, holding his rifle at the "ready." And even while I looked, I saw a man near the stern pick up a spear from the bottom of the canoe and pass it forward under the hand of the one who was standing up. In an instant I was struggling out of my rug, dragging my revolver from its holster, and yelling to Buta, "Shoot! Shoot!" He failed to do so, and as I reached the deck the first Malay was just clambering up the side, while the man behind him was swinging back his arm to hurl a spear. It was a question of seconds, but I was too near to the front man to fire. It may sound strange, but one has a great repugnance to firing a heavy revolver into a man's face when the muzzle will be touching him, even at such a moment of peril as I was then in. So I dashed my revolver sideways into his face, and I can still hear and feel the smash as it struck him. It was a very heavy weapon, made specially for me in America to take rifle cartridges, and the blow knocked the man head over heels into the water. At the same moment the Malay behind flung his spear. It passed by my head and sank deep into the deck-house. But our elevated position gave us such an advantage that the danger was virtually over, for the other men in the canoes were helpless as they sat covered by my revolver and Buta's rifle. A moment later Menir Khan had joined us, and he, of a more excitable temperament than his comrade, was for shooting the men as they crouched before us. But I shouted to them that if they did not leave instantly we should fire, the wounded man was dragged in, groaning nastily, and the canoes disappeared into the darkness. I have always felt certain that to Sri Paduka Wan Yusuf and his master I owed this unexpected visit, and I was lucky that it proved nothing worse than what the Far West knows as a "close call." Travel makes the fatalist, however, and the few seconds that saved me take on in memory an occult significance.

After this the voyage was uneventful except for a tropical storm which broke on us next morning and nearly sent us to the bottom. The boat turned out to be rotten, the sails ripped like paper, the ropes parted half-a-dozen times, and the *nakhoda* proved a mere landlubber. Buta had to stand by the jib-sheet, Menir Khan by the main-sheet, and I took the tiller for twelve consecutive hours, momentarily expecting to be pooped. On the third day we reached Tringanu, where I found the Sultan a pleasant and enlightened young man, and ten days later a little steamer landed us safe and sound at Singapore, three months and eleven days after I had left it for the opposite coast of the Peninsula.

CONCLUSION.

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AN EASTERN HOROSCOPE.

I HAVE done with the Far East as it is. It would be a dull imagination, however, that could regard the present without attempting to pierce the future. No Englishman, surely, can learn what his nation has accomplished there, without wondering what it is destined yet to do. My last thought at each place that I visited was, what will this be ten, twenty, a hundred years hence? The Far East, as I have tried to show, constitutes one distinct division of the globe—Europe, Asia, Africa, America, Australia, and the Far East, would be a fair partition of geographical interests. The sleepy Colossus of China forms one side of it; on the other, in extreme contrast, stands the passionate nation of Japan, half-intoxicated with the consciousness of its own power; the north is closed by the extremity of the vast Empire of Russia, mute and tranquil yet awhile because it has no nerve of connection with the throbbing West; at the south-west corner the energies of France are for the third time pushing her to sterile colonisation; beyond France, the Kingdom of Siam, its corruption and futility at length exposed, lies prone on the anvil of conflicting interests; beyond this, again, the remains of the mysterious Malay race dwindle on in jungles and shrinking villages; Portugal, the discoverer and once queen of the whole, now reigns over but the minutest and the most abject part; Spain possesses a fertile archipelago, only a small portion of which she has been able to conquer, and of that she has made but an object-lesson of intolerance; while the share of Germany

lies in the fact that, under the flags of other nations, her subjects work for starvation wages, and her manufacturers supply any object at any price. Finally, England is seated upon the edge of China, upon the point of a peninsula, and upon a rocky little island, while her ships plough every sea in an unending procession, her merchants do nine-tenths of the trade, her consuls hold the sway of kings, and her word is the primary condition of every change. An upheaval is now transmuting the conditions that have hitherto controlled the Far East. What is to come of it?

The answer is easy in part. Macao will disappear: it is worthless to Portugal, and no other country would take it as a gift. It will be absorbed by what remains of China, just as land once cultivated and then abandoned lapses back to the swarming jungle. I do not think that the Philippine Islands will remain Spanish. The present fever of colonisation among nations that cannot colonise will die away with the spread of democracy in Europe, and Manila will slip from the feeble grasp of a people for whom the march of time has proved exhausting. Only the excuse of a quarrel is needed to make Japan the heir. Spain, the land of armada and galleon, once the champion of Christendom and the synonym of courage, would be powerless to resist the onslaught of these Vikings of Asia. The Malays are destined to a British dominion. The future of Korea, for so long a kingdom *pauvre, perdu, et impuissant*, presents few more problems.

The influence of Russia in the Far East is about to begin. At this moment Russia and England are prepared to lay down conditions which China and Japan must obey, and which other countries would not lightly disregard. This is a new role for Russia, but when the Trans-Siberian Railway is completed, she will play it often. Vladivostok is one of the most powerfully-defended sea-ports in the world, and I regard it as certain beyond all question that Russia will have a winter port in the Far East by the time her railway connection with it is ready.

More than this, however, if the Anglo-Russian *entente* proves a durable arrangement, I have given my reasons already for thinking that Russia may well be a party to a division of interests which would bring her as her own share a much greater extent of territory and influence than she might otherwise venture to expect. Ten millions of people in Manchuria may be added to her empire, and one of the richest parts of the Far East may be opened to her for development. One thing may be taken for granted with regard to Russia—that she will not stand alone here, and consequently that if we ourselves are not in friendly alliance with her, we shall sooner or later have to face her as a member of a combination hostile to our interests. Whatever may be the relations and the possibilities of England and Russia in Europe, I can see no reason why they should not pursue a common aim in the Far East. Now that the long-prevalent superstition that China might serve us as a bulwark against a Russian advance has at length been exploded, our statesmen will no doubt be more prepared for this alternative of friendship.

The position and prospects of France cannot be contemplated without much sympathy. This nation—"immortal and indomitable France"—is apparently entering upon a period of disturbance in Europe which will necessarily be reflected upon all her colonial enterprises. And anxiety in Paris means two things in Indo-China: first, a loosening of control over the local authorities, with the inevitable result that the more daring and unscrupulous of these get their way, and raise troublesome questions with their neighbours; and second, that there will be less ability and willingness at home to meet these troubles when they come. It is not yet generally recognised that France has never been less able to colonise with success than to-day. Not only has her population begun to decrease, after a long period of stagnation, but her finances, for so long the wonder and envy of the world, have now taken the same turn. When any anxiety is expressed upon this latter

point the reply is always to point to the marvellous resilience of France in 1871—the ease with which she paid £200,000,000 sterling to Germany. But the state of her revenues which permitted this exists no longer. Although the payment upon her public debt has been largely decreased in many directions by operations of conversion, her total expenditure has risen since 1888 by the enormous sum of two hundred millions of francs a year. Upon this point M. Leroy-Beaulieu has recently expressed himself as follows: "This situation is most grave, because it removes all immediate prospect of an amelioration of the public finances. We must not lose sight of the fact that France, unlike England, Germany, Russia, and even many other States, has now only a stationary, if not a decreasing population; that her wealth, on the other hand, and the total of her private revenues, increase much more slowly than in the past. The elasticity of private revenues, as well as of public ones, is sensibly less to-day than it was fifteen years ago, or twenty-five years, or forty years, or fifty years. . . . The political and administrative bodies of France are hugging themselves in a fatal illusion, namely, that private revenues in France continue to have the same elasticity, the same ascending force, as during the decade which followed the war of 1870–71, and during the eighteen years of economical transformation and renovation under the Second Empire. There is nothing of the kind (*Il n'en est rien*)." *

The enthusiasm of colonisation is to-day at its height in France. Apart from the fact that much of this is unquestionably due to jealousy of England, we may remember that such a fever has had its rise and its fall before, and believe that, for the above grave reasons, the present one will fade also. It is not so long since the Chamber was within a very few votes of formally abandoning Tongking. A serious complication in Europe, the triumph of a Socialist party, or a financial crisis—which is only too probable—would renew this desire to shake

* *Journal des Débats*, November 3, 1894.

off a burden which brings no corresponding advantage to the French people. Sooner or later the French masses will remember—*mutatis mutandis*—the inquiry which Victor Hugo expressed in these cutting words:—

> Et battez-vous pour des Altesses
> Qui se feront des politesses
> Pendant que vous, vous pourrirez ?

For "Altesses" read "députés," and for "politesses" read "insultes," and you have the question the French people will ask themselves when they discover that for them colonies mean nothing whatever but taxes. To this result my chapter on "The Cost of a French Colony" may perhaps contribute its mite. The sudden recall of M. de Lanessan, too, whether or not it be in connection with the railway concessions of which I have spoken, is likely to shake public confidence in colonial administration. The bearing of all this upon the horoscope of the Far East is obvious. It is difficult to believe that the French Empire of Indo-China is a permanent one, because it has behind it an unstable national policy, a decreasing population, and a shrinking revenue, while it lacks wholly the primal justification of commercial success.

What is to be the future of China? Here the chief factor of the problem—the character of the Chinese people—is so obscure that nobody who knows China at all will venture on a confident forecast. China will not over-run the world. China will not raise herself to the rank of a compact, homogeneous, powerful nation, observant of the laws which govern civilised intercourse. Japan will desire to reorganise China, and will not be permitted. These things are sure enough. But they bring us no nearer to a conclusion. My own view—which I present with due diffidence—is that the fate of China—I use the name for convenience, although, as I have said before, there is really no such thing as "China" at all—this country of rag-tag and pig-tail, will be partition among other nations. China has hitherto

"salted all the seas that run into her," and obstruction, "the only force in China upon which it is safe to rely," has served her well. But she has never had to face a prospect like that which lies before her to-day. I think she will ultimately go to pieces under the pressure of the conflicting interests that focus upon her. As Wingrove Cooke well said, "the whole present system of China is a hollow thing, with a hard brittle surface: we try in vain to scratch it; but some day a happy blow will shiver it. It will all go together. A Chinaman has no idea of surrendering a part to save the rest. The only question with him is, how long can it be resisted? how long can it be evaded?" The West has now come too close for any nation of the East to remain much longer—

> Aloof from our mutations and unrest,
> Alien to our achievements and desires.

And Japan? "With the first wind has come the blossoming of the chrysanthemum," as the *hokku*-writer said. One thing only may prove a pitfall for this wonderful nation—her own ambition. If she makes such demands or adopts such an attitude as will bring her into acute conflict with the European Powers, her foreign affairs will be marked by bitter disappointments, and these will bring dissensions and possibly disasters into her domestic politics. No nation, least of all England, wishes to hinder the gratification of every legitimate Japanese ambition, but signs are unfortunately not wanting to show that her victories and achievements, both in peace and war, may turn her head and lure her into aspirations that can never be realised. The speech of Count Okuma, which I have quoted elsewhere, is of itself enough to give rise to these fears. Already in imagination the Japanese Press sees several provinces of northern China annexed, and even the Emperor of Japan seated upon the Dragon Throne. In sober earnest a Provisional Government for China is already prepared in Japan, and many of its officials have left for the front. "The Land of the Rising

Sun," says the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, "should not be content with anything short of the glory and grandeur of that symbol itself"! But if Japan avoids this pitfall, her future may be bright indeed. Victorious over her great enemy, rich with the spoils of peace, free from external anxieties, her population eager and able to found colonies, her revenue increasing, and her commerce rapidly developing, the first Asiatic nation in the world, and the predominant Power of the Far East, there is no reason why she should not retain all the admiration, the respect and the affection she has won.

Since my chapters on Japan passed out of the printers' hands however, her friends have learned with grief, on evidence which it is impossible to disregard, that the capture of Port Arthur was stained by the wholesale slaughter of unarmed Chinese. So far as is at present known there were several European eye-witnesses of the facts. Old men and boys were cut down; non-combatants were killed inside houses; prisoners tied together in bands were butchered and mutilated; boat-loads of fugitives were shot down or torpedoed. It may well be that further news will reduce these charges somewhat, but there seems no ground for hope that the charges may be altogether disproved. Worst of all, these atrocities are said to have been committed for several days in succession, by the troops under Count Oyama, whose proclamation commanding mercy and consideration for prisoners and non-combatants I have already reproduced. It is most earnestly to be hoped that a stringent inquiry into this matter will be set on foot at the earliest moment, in order to show the world that such barbarities are as repulsive to the best sentiments of Japan as to our own. At the same time a word of protest must be uttered against the tendency to condemn the entire Japanese people for the acts of some of their soldiers. To begin with, the soldiers are drawn from the class which has had least opportunity of imbibing the spirit of civilisation of which the Japanese Government has given so many striking examples. Moreover, the

horrors inflicted by the Chinese in Port Arthur upon their Japanese prisoners might be held to excuse a fury of revenge, if this had not been permitted to last. And such wholesale killing is no new thing in Eastern warfare. There were scenes in the suppression of the Indian mutiny for which the British people would be sorry to be held responsible. Skobeleff slaughtered thousands of Turkomans at Geok Tepe on January 24, 1881.* The "incident" of Penjdeh was not much better. And after the fall of Son-tay in the French war in Tongking there was a night of equal horror.† Moreover, the same journal which has been foremost in exposing the atrocities of Port Arthur once had occasion to denounce the French in similar terms for the shooting of defenceless Chinese after the naval massacre of Foochow. And to say nothing of the awful times of the Commune, it is commonly believed that the Franco-German war produced scenes that both armies would gladly forget. Therefore, however bad the story of the fall of Port Arthur may prove to be, let us not pass a verdict of guilty upon the whole Japanese nation. The extraordinary fury of the Japanese armed coolies and soldiers was due in great part to the indiscretion of an officer. It was known that three Japanese spies caught in Chin-Chow had first been subjected to the torture of bone-

* "At 4 in the afternoon Skobeleff led his cavalry through the breach, and ordered both horse and foot to pursue the retreating enemy and to give no quarter. This command was obeyed by both with savage precision till darkness fell—by the infantry (six companies) for a distance of seven miles, by the cavalry (a division of dragoons and four *sotnias* of Cossacks) for eleven miles, supported by a battery of horse artillery with long range guns. Eight thousand persons of both sexes and all ages were mercilessly cut down and slain. 'On the morning after the battle they lay in rows like freshly-mown hay, as they had been swept down by the mitrailleuses and cannon.'" The Hon. George N. Curzon, "Russia in Central Asia," p. 82.

† "That was a terrible night in Son-tay. The Turcos had entered, with comparatively little opposition, by the eastern gate, and they admittedly killed men, women, and children—every living thing they came across. The French troops were not so bad, but the butchery of Chinamen and crop-headed Annamese (the Prince's men) was sickening." J. G. Scott (Special Correspondent in Tongking at the time, and recently British Minister in Bangkok), "France and Tongking," p. 85. See also C. B. Norman, "Tonkin, or France in the Far East," p. 245.

crushing and then burned alive. Shortly afterwards three Japanese soldiers were either captured or killed during the march on Port Arthur, and the advance guard found their bodies. They were decapitated, their hands cut off, their bodies ripped open and their livers torn out. Instead of burying the bodies, the officer in command caused them to be laid out upon a platform by the roadside, and the whole army thus saw them as it marched past. The consequent blood-thirst became so uncontrollable that the Japanese officers could only protect the people after the fall of Port Arthur by posting notices upon houses containing fugitives, saying, "The people of this residence must not be killed," and even finally by pinning labels upon the breasts of Chinese, bearing the saving words, "This person must not be killed." For my own part, the news is beyond comprehension. That Count Oyama and his officers should have allowed days to be spent in butchering prisoners and captives—as is asserted—is almost unimaginable. Until this news came, every correspondent with the Japanese forces had paid a high tribute to their discipline and humanity, while the Japanese Red Cross Society was positively held up as an example to our own. And in the latest papers from Japan I find this item among the notes from the front: "Some Japanese coolies who murdered a Chinese in the Liau-tung Peninsula were summarily executed by order of General Oyama."

The kingdom of Siam is another uncertain factor in the future of the Far East. I have given many reasons for believing that there is no hope whatever of the duration of an independent monarchy there. Sooner or later some stronger hand will have to take the helm. The ambition of France has decided that the hand shall be hers. England, on the contrary, is definitely pledged to the maintenance of Siamese autonomy and integrity. Thus the ground is prepared for grave events. Every day that passes, however, and many incidents that have occurred even since my chapters on Siam were written, deepen my conviction

that our responsible statesmen have not realised either the difficulties or the dangers of the situation, and that they are still cherishing hopes of Siamese action which are inevitably destined to a rude disappointment. The sad death of the Crown Prince, too, has intensified every element of uncertainty. His life and future formed the one remaining object of the King's devotion: now that he is dead the enfeebled monarch will withdraw himself more than ever from the task of attempting to direct and control the crooked aims and forcible-feeble characters that are contending around him. The appointment of the new Crown Prince represents the triumph of the Second Queen, a lady of far greater ambition and determination than her senior rival, and a life-long devotee of intrigue. Her eldest son was born on New Year's Day, 1880, and his name and title are Somdetch Chow Fah Maha Vachiravudh. The name "Thoon Kramom Tho," which has been telegraphed from Bangkok by correspondents obviously unfamiliar with the Siamese Court, is merely a familiar abbreviation of a birth-title, and not the Prince's name at all. Prince Maha Vachiravudh has been studying in England for several years in the home of a private family of much educational distinction, and he is described by those who know him best as a youth of much amiability and intelligence, though the circumstances of his life and the comparative obscurity to which he has been purposely relegated have not been such as to develop in him any marked strength of character. He is, of course, like his late brother, the nephew of Prince Devawongse and Prince Svasti. The chief danger that awaits him is the deterioration which must almost inevitably follow upon his abrupt withdrawal from the excellent influences which have surrounded him in England, and his exposure, at an age when these cannot have produced a permanent effect, to the ruinous and debilitating life of the Royal Palace of Bangkok. As for the "great reform" just announced, "a Legislative Council consisting of the Ministers and at least twelve nobles, who are to hold deliberations and pass new laws, with the Royal sanction,

or, in the event of the Sovereign's illness, or absence from any other cause, by a two-thirds majority without such sanction," I fear it can only be regarded as fresh dust thrown in the eyes of Europe. As I have explained, there are no such persons as "nobles" in Siam, and the Legislative Council will to all intents be the same band of royal half-brothers who form the Cabinet, grouped under another name. The news is more important as showing the King's public admission of his own physical exhaustion, and his determination to relinquish even the pretence of holding the reins of government. He was not strong enough to announce his successor with his own lips.

There remains only the last house of the horoscope of the Far East. England—what is to be her future there? The aim of this book has been to show that we have the right and the opportunity, and therefore the duty, greatly to extend our influence and our trade—in a word, our Empire—in this great division of the globe. The figures of our predominant interest, which I have given in every case where they could be obtained, speak for themselves. No other Power can present statistics which even approach them. And the future, if we grasp it now, will utterly dwarf the past. The rest of the world is parcelled out like an allotment-ground. In the Far East alone an unworked mine awaits us. A distinguished French traveller has well described the consideration which should weigh with the statesmen of the hour. "It is in Asia once more that will be decided the destinies of the world. In Asia will be founded and will increase great empires, and whoever succeeds in making his voice heeded in the Far East will be able also to speak in dominating accents to Europe. . . . *Be Asiatic, there lies the future!*" *

I am profoundly convinced that this is true. The years that I have given to the Far East have taught it as their supreme lesson, and the highest ambition of my life would be gratified

* Prince Henri d'Orleans, "Around Tonkin," 1894, p. 426.

if I could believe at the close that I had helped to teach it to my countrymen.

It is no cant to say that the British public is a mass of people with a conscience. It is capable of supporting a Government that should resign an advantage we might secure from a rival by force of arms, for no other reason than that to seize it would be an act of injustice. And its enthusiasm cannot be secured for any new Imperial movement unless, besides the expediency, the right can be shown and the benefits to be conferred upon the nations we bring under an extended dominion. Therefore any appeal to the British public, in whose hands for good or evil the destinies of the Empire now rest, must address itself in no small part to their conscience. Herein lies the strongest hope of British extension in the Far East. As Mr. H. H. Johnston has recently said, "the British Empire is not merely the heritage of thirty-eight millions of pink-and-white Englishmen, but it is a league of peace and commerce in which black and yellow men are concerned." And the extension of our authority over these alien races is for them an unmitigated blessing. A sharp-eyed foreign critic who has lately returned from a journey round the Empire has declared this in impressive words. "All these new countries, which are so many outlets for the commerce of the world, are not monopolised by the English for their own use only. People from other nations may go there and settle, without having any formality to go through or any foreign taxes to pay. They may go on speaking their own language, practising their own religion, and may enjoy every right of citizenship. And if they are not too stubborn or too old to learn, they may lay to heart many good lessons in those nurseries of liberty. If I have not succeeded in proving that in spite of their hundred and one foibles the Anglo-Saxons are the only people on this earth who enjoy perfect liberty, I have lost my time." * When a native race comes under British control it receives immediately a birth-gift—Freedom, "heaven-sent, red-tape-bound, straight from Downing

* Max O'Rell, "John Bull and Co.," p. 318.

Street." It has been my fortune to see at close quarters almost all the civilised nations of the world, and most of the great colonies, and the result is that I believe in Englishmen above all other men, and in British rule above all other rule. Therefore the British Empire is to me the most important impersonal consideration on earth, and the transmission to our heirs of the legacy of our fathers the greatest responsibility.

There are many joyful signs that a new era has dawned. No leading statesman would venture to say to-day what Cobden said in 1836: "The colonies, the army, the navy . . . are only appendages of our aristocratical government. John Bull has for the next fifty years the task set him of cleansing his house from this stuff." The recognition of the British *Drang* which no man either created or can hinder, the imperative need of new markets, the sight of the marvellous progress of native races under our flag, the just alarm at the advance of our rivals, the awakening at last to an appreciation of the fact that powerful and jealous nations are plotting for our inheritance—these are bringing about a change, before it is too late, in the minds of the inhabitants of Great Britain. But the best sign of all, and therefore the most hopeful portent in the heavens of this Far Eastern horoscope, is that a Liberal Prime Minister has declared to all the world that the "party of a small England, of a shrunk England, of a degraded England, of a neutral England, of a submissive England, has died."

THE END.

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